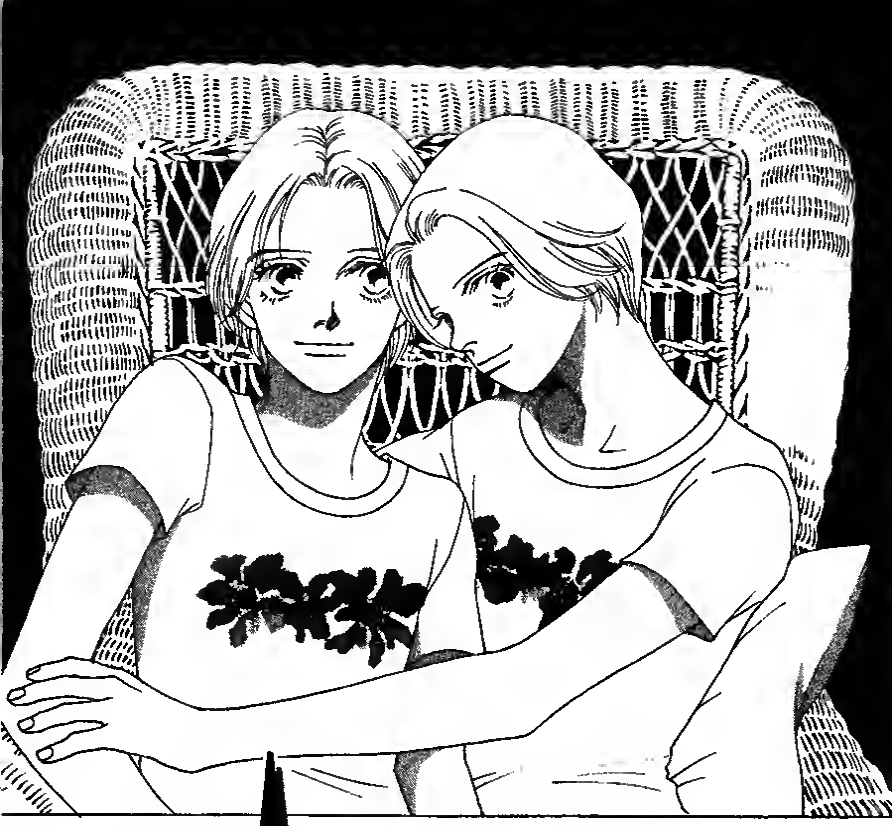
MARS

12

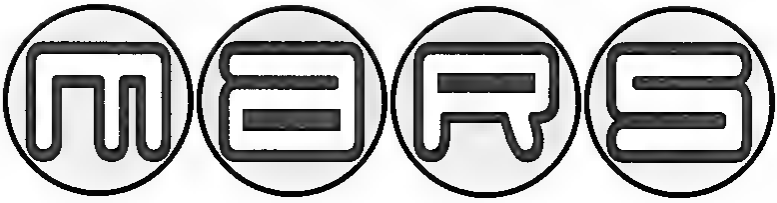
by Fuyumi Soryo



MARS 12

マース

惣領冬実
（そうりょうふゆみ）



Volume 12

By Fuyumi Soryo

TOKYOPOP®

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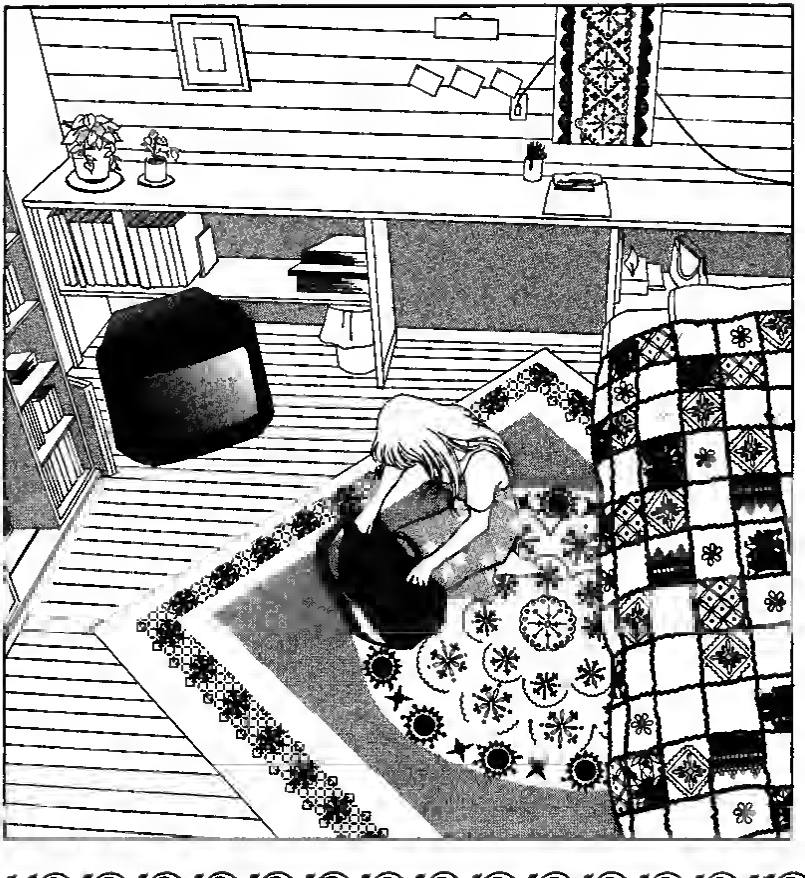


Rei Kashiro:
A high school student who races motor cycles. His twin brother has committed suicide. Rei has proposed to Kira.

LEGEND OF MARS

Kira Aso:
She's going out with Rei and was raped by her stepfather during junior high school. Right after Kira and Rei decide to get married, her stepfather comes to get her.

The story until now:

Kira is spellbound by Rei when he kisses a statue of Mars in the art studio. They begin dating, but Kira's stepfather is against the relationship and becomes violent towards her. She runs away to live with Rei and they decide to get married. When Rei's stepfather comes to get her, Rei ends up assaulting him, and Rei and Kira run away to escape potential charges of kidnapping and attempted murder. Then Kira goes back to her stepfather's house because she doesn't want Rei to get in trouble. Rei, in turn, goes to see his estranged father, who agrees to pressure Kira's stepfather not to press charges on the condition that Rei return to school and quit riding motorcycles. Rei goes to Kira's house to ask for her hand in marriage. The reunited couple holds on to each other tightly...

Kira's stepfather:
He is married to Kira's mother and raped Kira in the past.

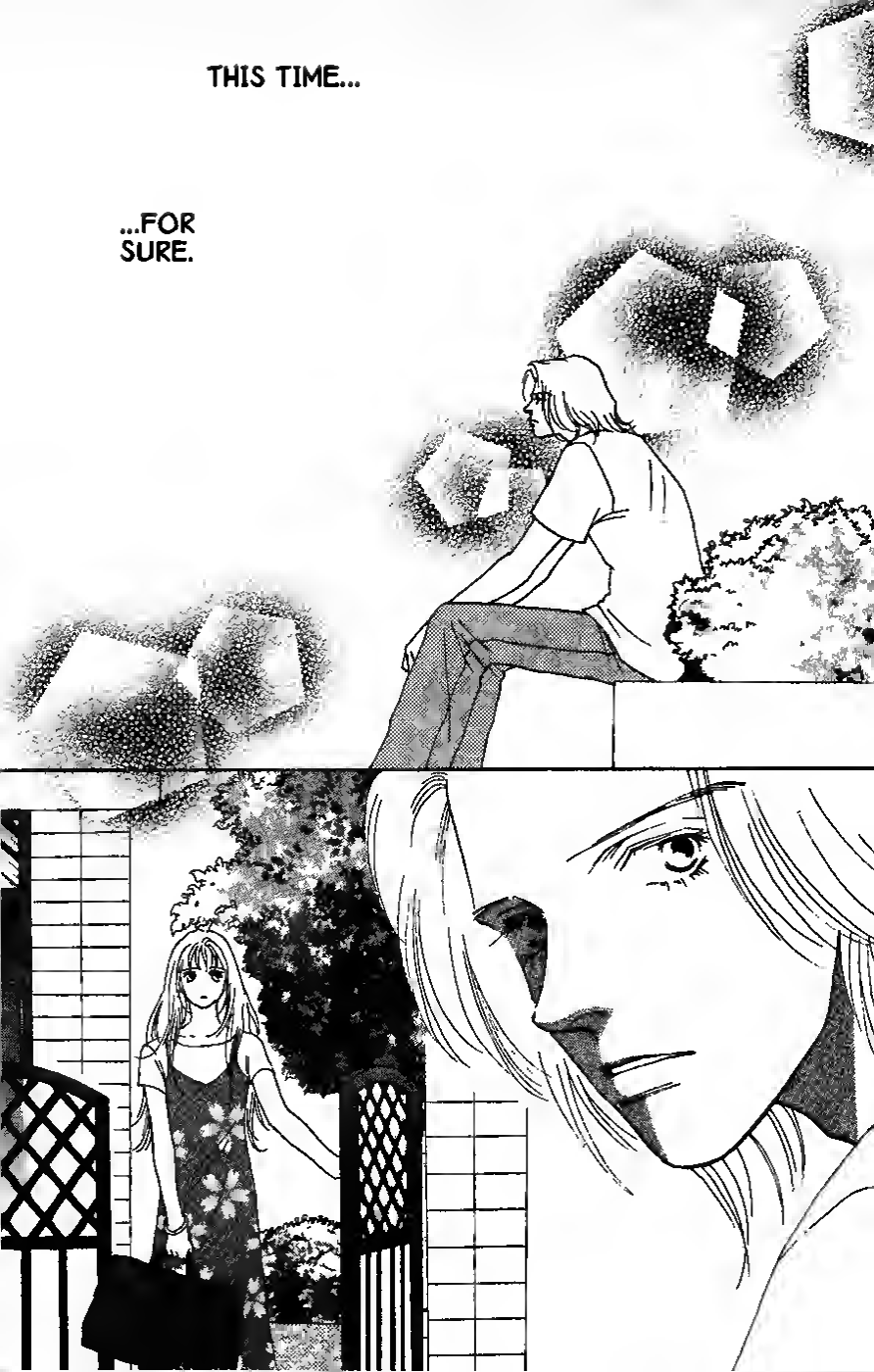
Rei's father:
He's the president of a company called The OAK Group. Rei doesn't live with his father

THIS IS ALL YOU'RE TAKING?
MOTHER...
...REI AND I WILL JUST BUY THE REST LITTLE BY LITTLE.
YEAH... I CAN GET BY AS LONG AS I HAVE MY WINTER CLOTHES...

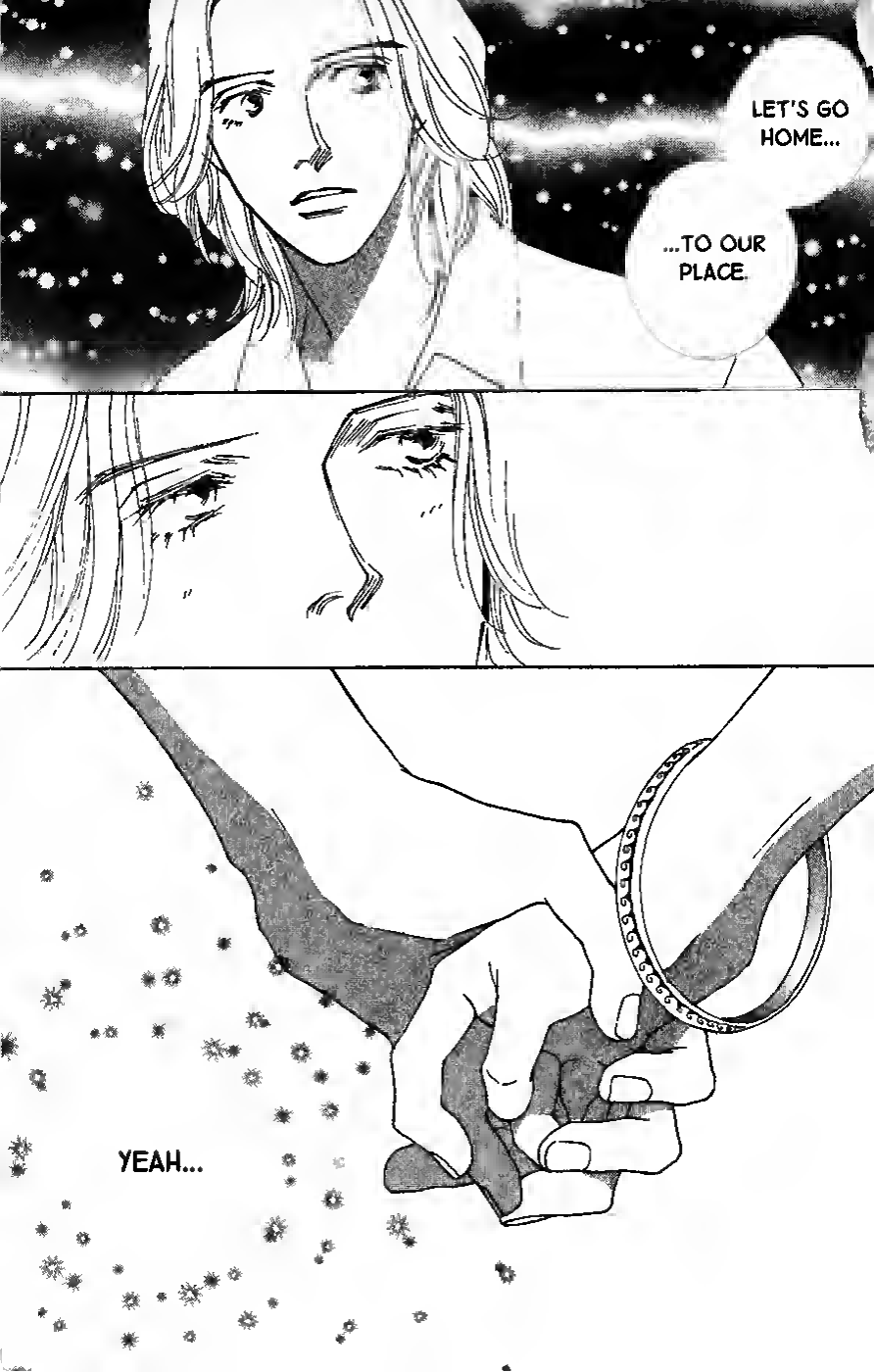
IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP...
I GUESS THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ANYMORE...

I FIXED...
THE BROKEN CLASP.
YOU SAID IT WAS AN IMPORTANT GOOD LUCK CHARM FOR YOU.
MOTHER...

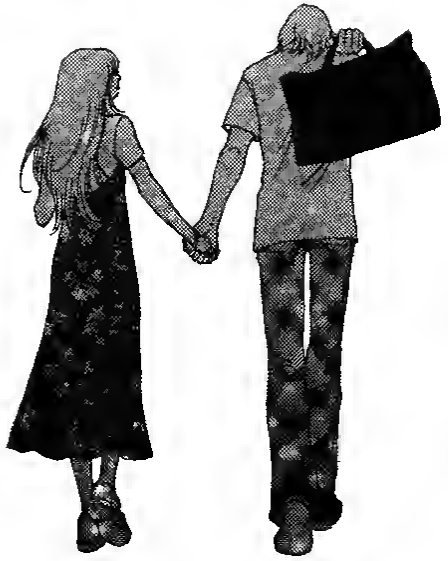
STAY HEALTHY...
...AND BE HAPPY.


THIS TIME...
...FOR SURE.

I'LL NEVER COME BACK HERE AGAIN...
ARE YOU ALL SET?
FROM THIS POINT ON, YOU ARE MY FAMILY.

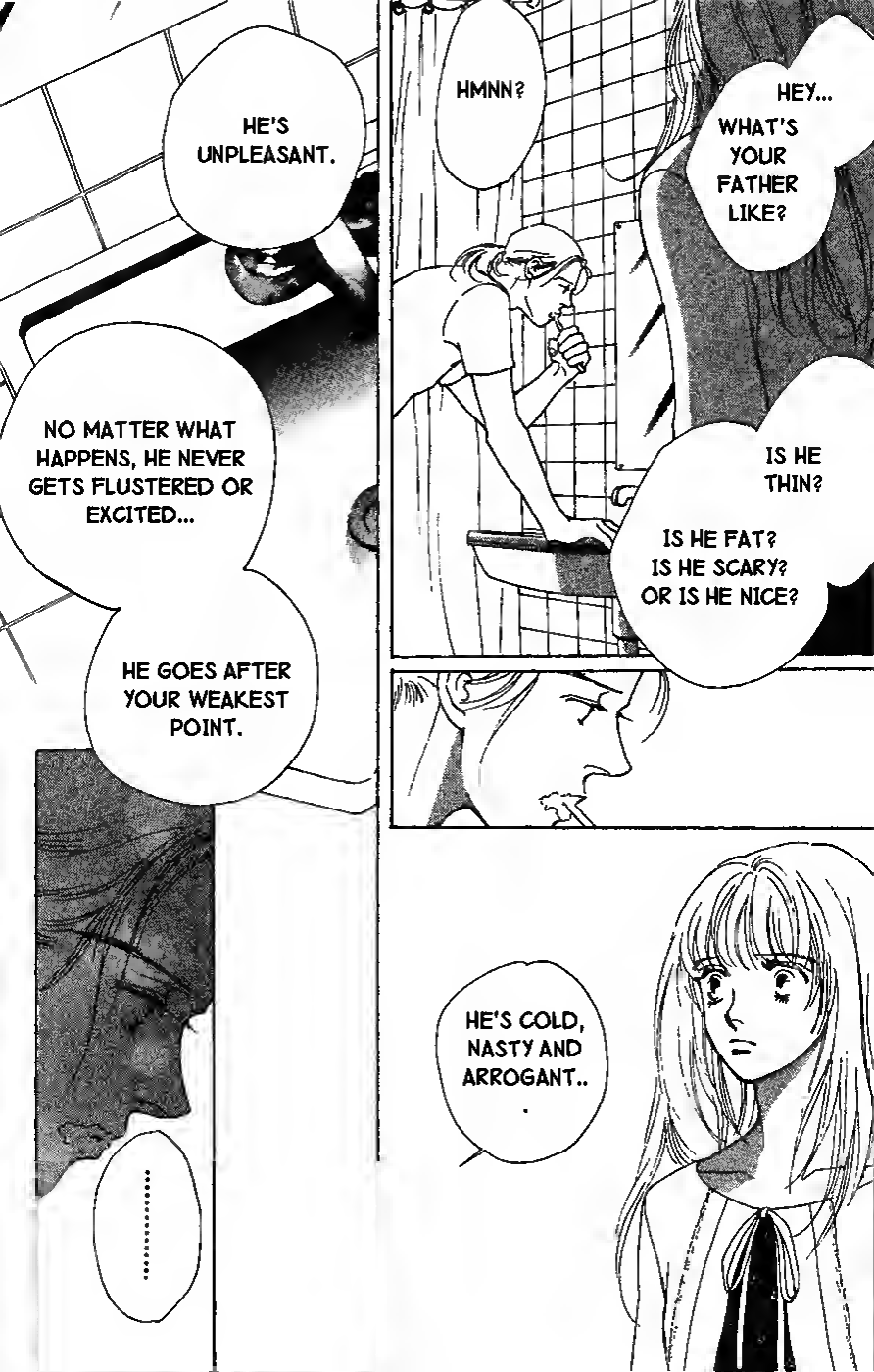

LET'S GO HOME...
...TO OUR PLACE.
YEAH...

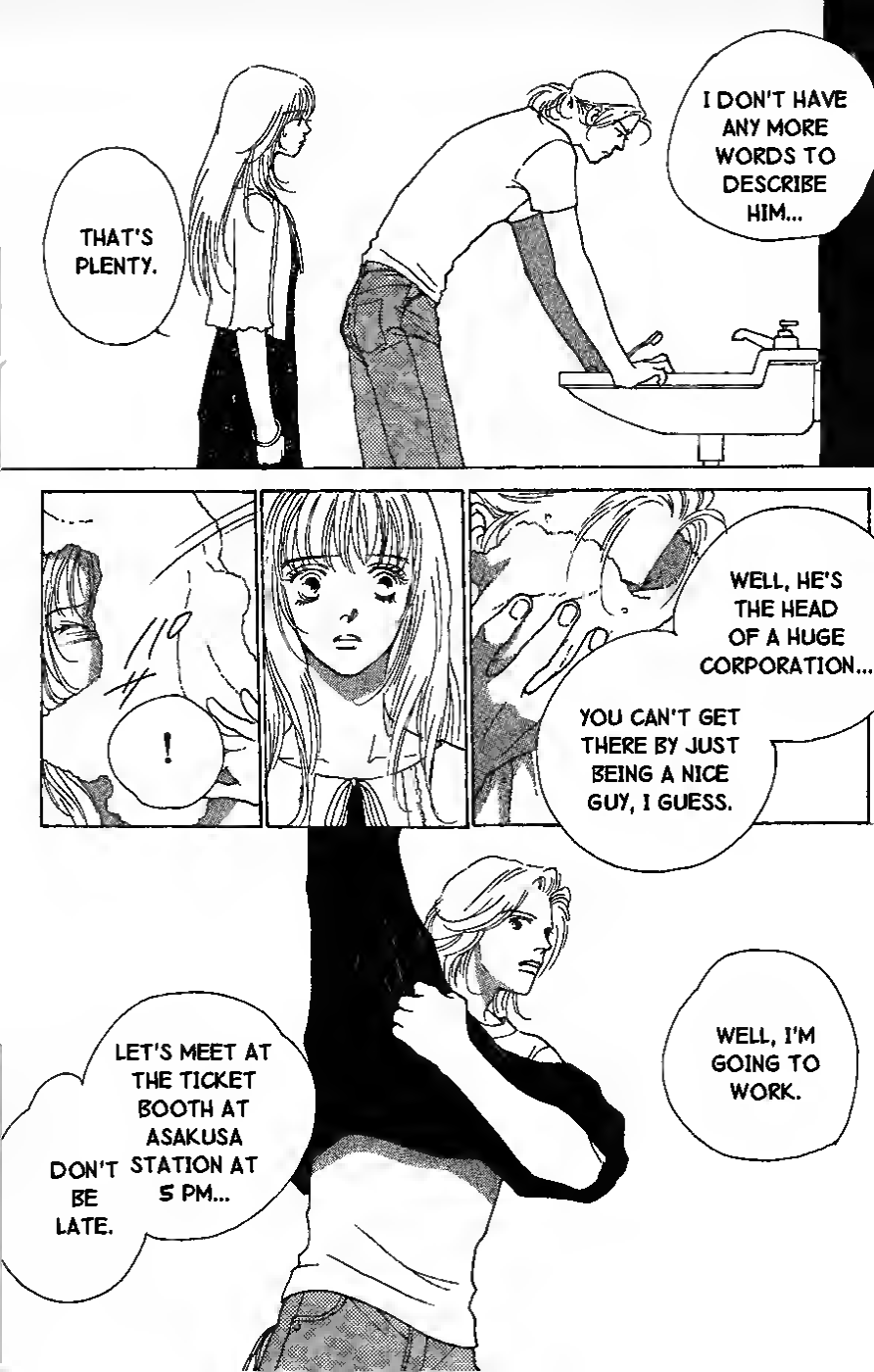
LET'S GO HOME...

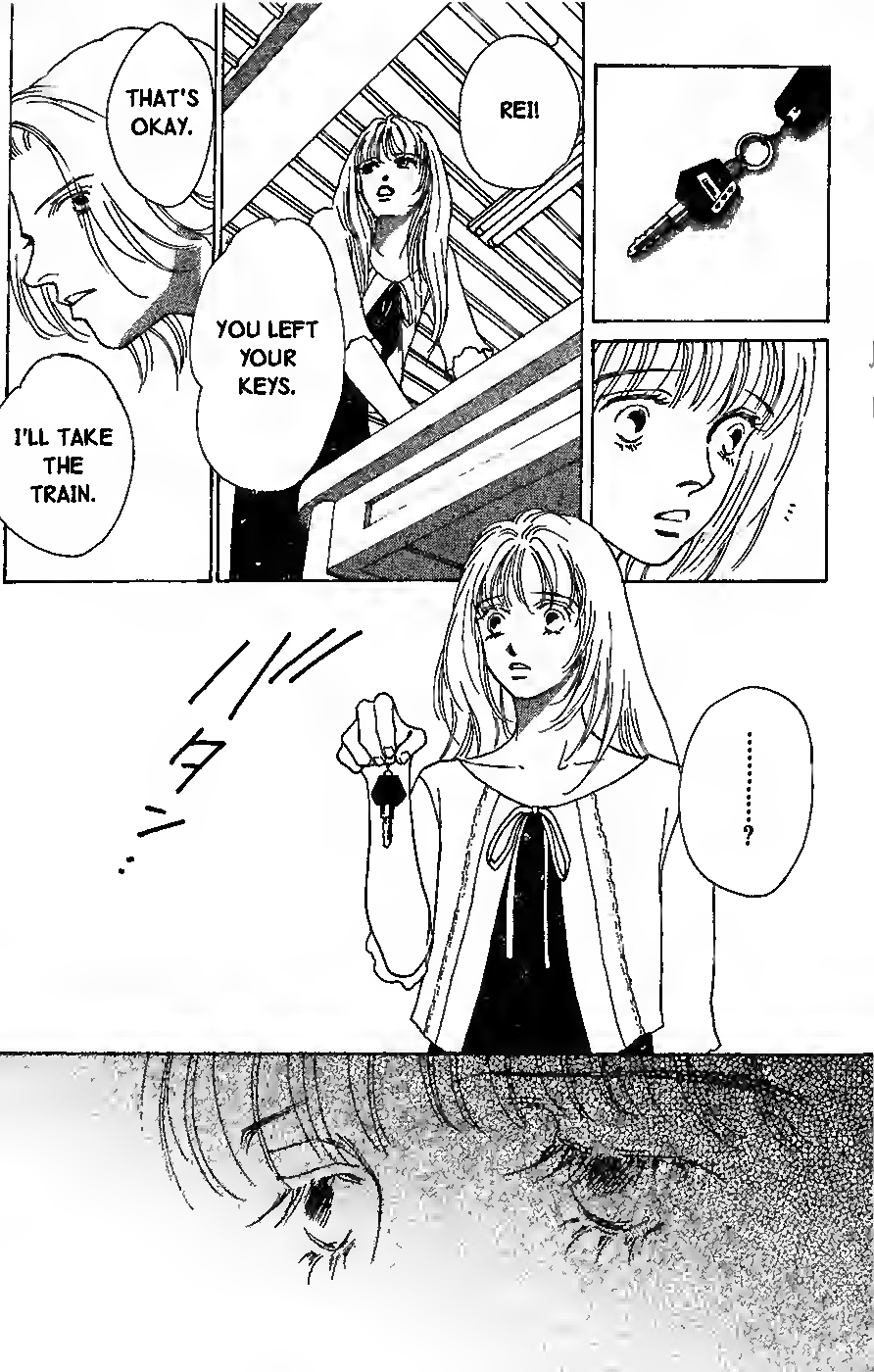


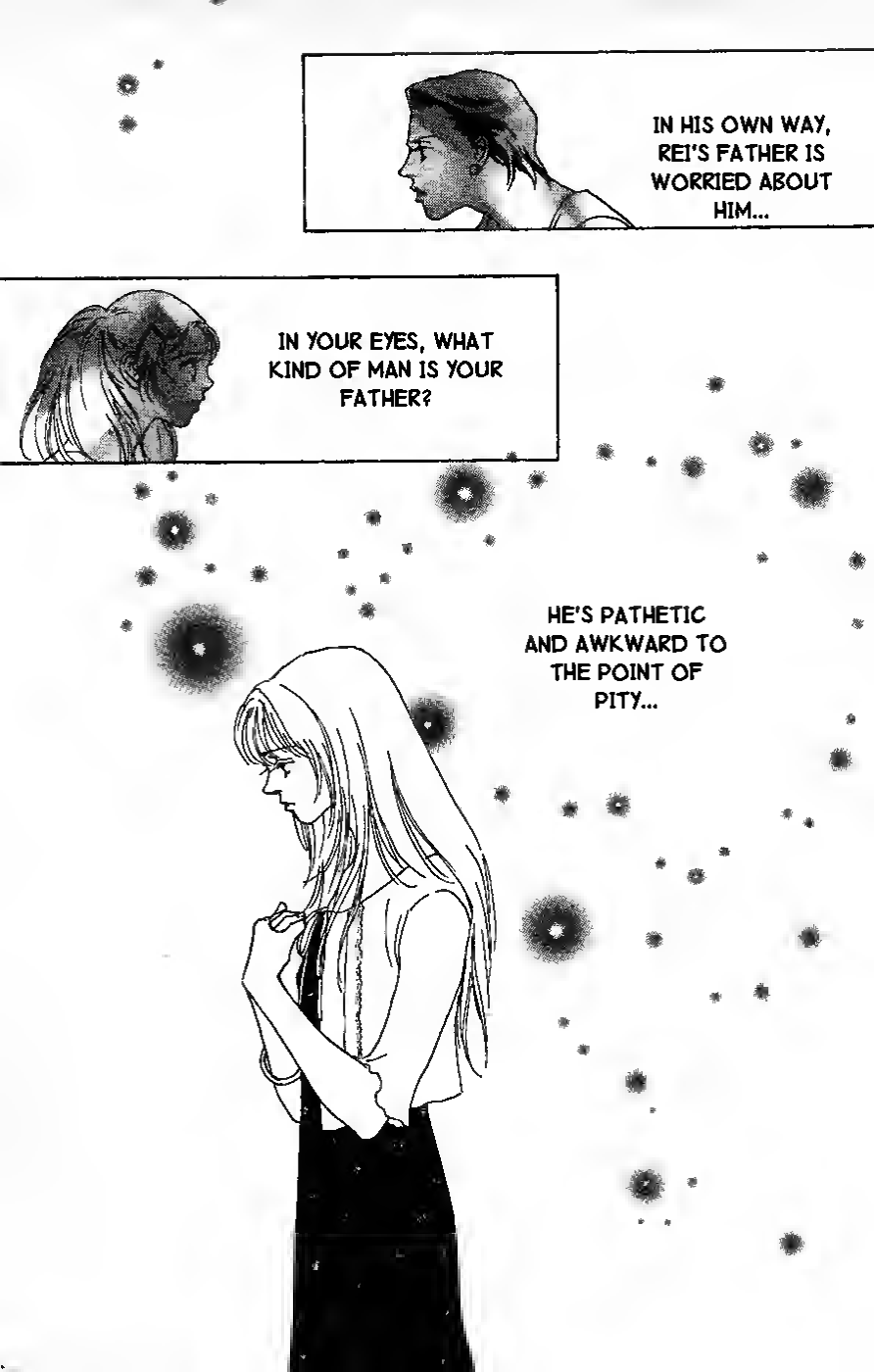
HEY, REI?
ARE YOU SURE WHAT I'M WEARING IS OKAY?
I'VE NEVER EATEN AT A FANCY PLACE BEFORE...
...SO I DON'T REALLY KNOW.

YEAH, SURE.
YOU LOOK CUTE!
HEY!
I'M MAKING AN EFFORT, YOU KNOW...
I EVEN BORROWED CLOTHES FROM VIOLET.
WHAT'S WITH THE ATTITUDE?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT...
WE'RE JUST HAVING LUNCH WITH MY OLD MAN.
YEAH, MAYBE IT'S NO BIG DEAL FOR YOU...
BUT I'M MEETING HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME TODAY.

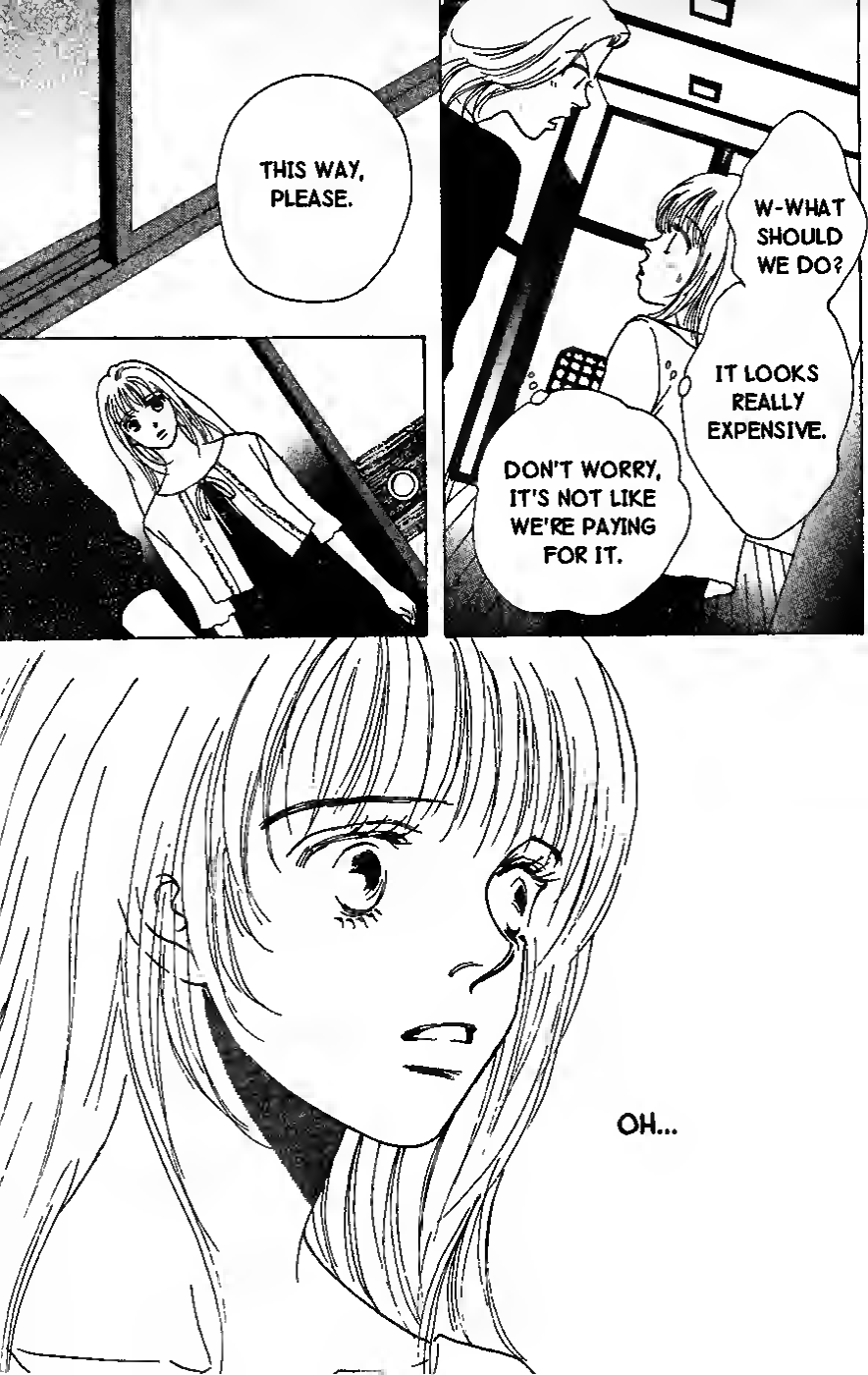

HE'S UNPLEASANT.
HMNN?
HEY... WHAT'S YOUR FATHER LIKE?
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, HE NEVER GETS FLUSTERED OR EXCITED...
IS HE THIN?
IS HE FAT? IS HE SCARY? OR IS HE NICE?
HE GOES AFTER YOUR WEAKEST POINT.
HE'S COLD, NASTY AND ARROGANT..
.
.....


I DON'T HAVE ANY MORE WORDS TO DESCRIBE HIM...
THAT'S PLENTY.
WELL, HE'S THE HEAD OF A HUGE CORPORATION...
YOU CAN'T GET THERE BY JUST BEING A NICE GUY, I GUESS.
!
WELL, I'M GOING TO WORK.
LET'S MEET AT THE TICKET BOOTH AT ASAKUSA STATION AT 5 PM...
DON'T BE LATE.

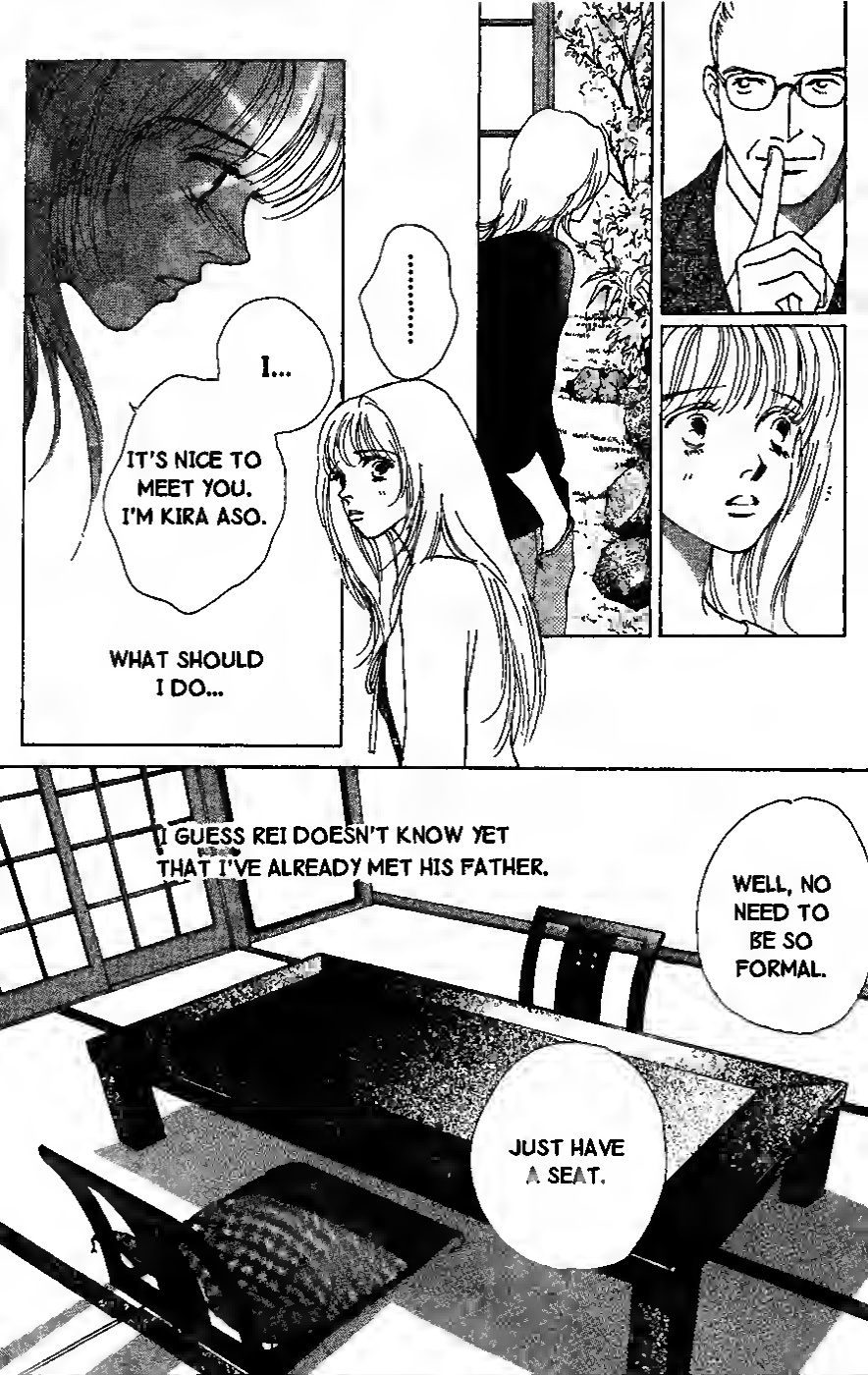

THAT'S OKAY.
I'LL TAKE THE TRAIN.
REI!
YOU LEFT YOUR KEYS.
.....?

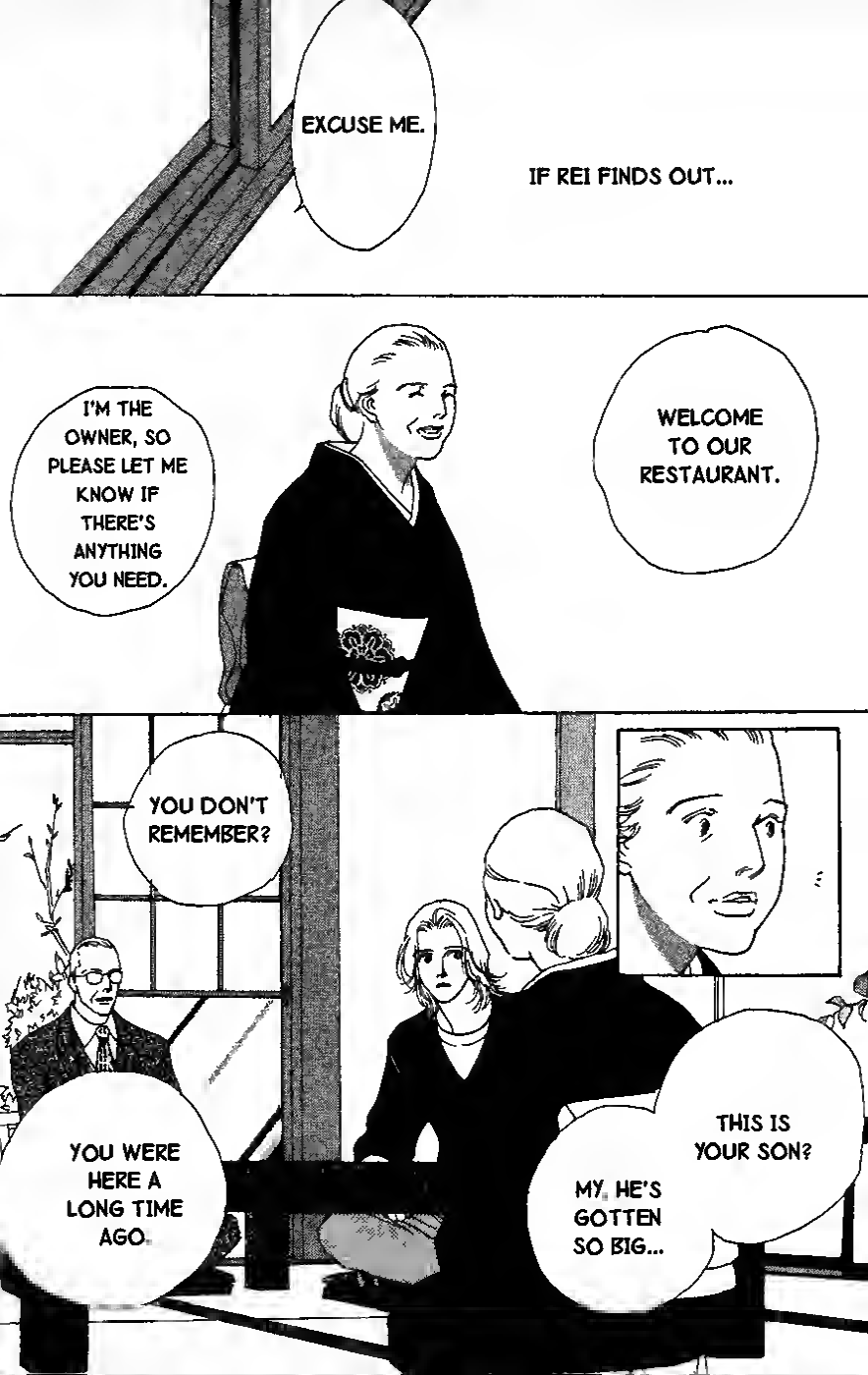

IN HIS OWN WAY, REI'S FATHER IS WORRIED ABOUT HIM...
IN YOUR EYES, WHAT KIND OF MAN IS YOUR FATHER?
HE'S PATHETIC AND AWKWARD TO THE POINT OF PITY...

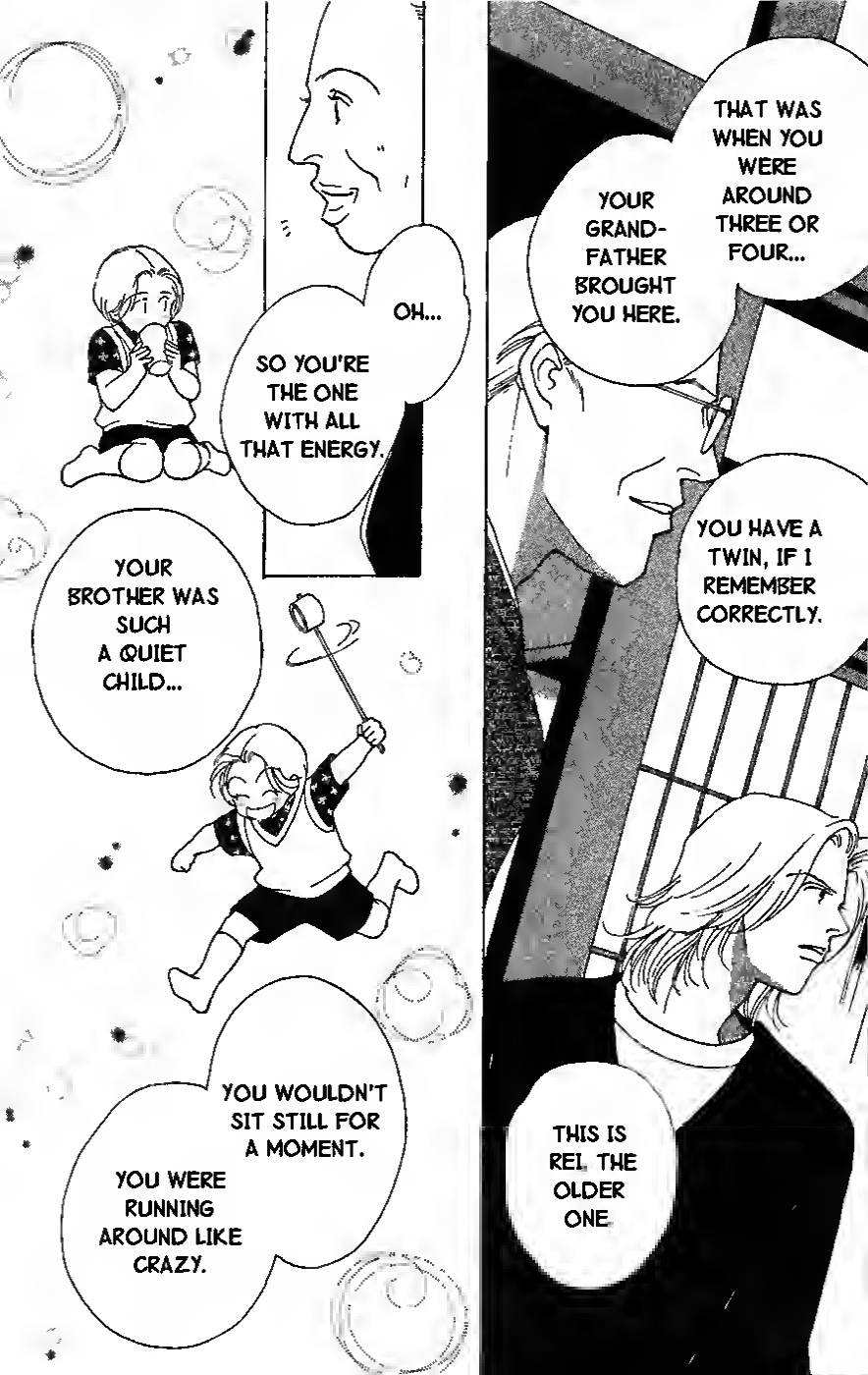
HELLO. WEL-COME!
YOUR FATHER'S HERE WAITING FOR YOU.

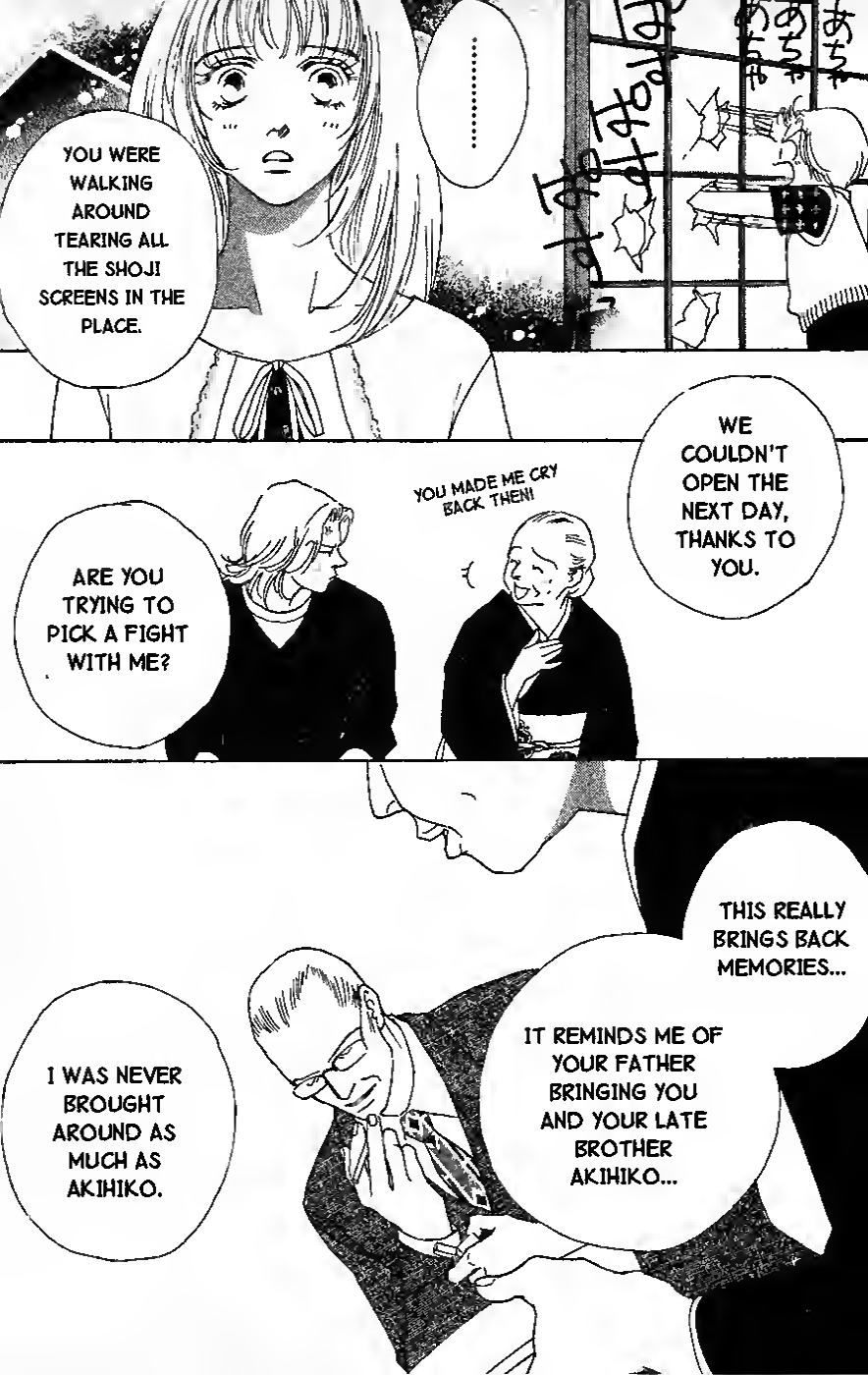

THIS WAY, PLEASE.
W-WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
IT LOOKS REALLY EXPENSIVE.
DON'T WORRY, IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE PAYING FOR IT.
OH...

HE'S FROM THAT...
THIS MAN...
"HOW MUCH IS THIS PAINTING?"
NICE TO MEET YOU.
NO WAY...
I'M REI'S FATHER, MR. KASHINO.
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE...


I...
IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU. I'M KIRA ASO.
WHAT SHOULD I DO...
.....
I GUESS REI DOESN'T KNOW YET THAT I'VE ALREADY MET HIS FATHER.
WELL, NO NEED TO BE SO FORMAL.
JUST HAVE A SEAT.


EXCUSE ME.
IF REI FINDS OUT...
I'M THE OWNER, SO PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF THERE'S ANYTHING YOU NEED.
WELCOME TO OUR RESTAURANT.
YOU DON'T REMEMBER?
YOU WERE HERE A LONG TIME AGO.
MY, HE'S GOTTEN SO BIG...
THIS IS YOUR SON?


THIS IS REI, THE OLDER ONE.
YOU HAVE A TWIN, IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY.
THAT WAS WHEN YOU WERE AROUND THREE OR FOUR...
YOUR GRAND-FATHER BROUGHT YOU HERE.
OH...
SO YOU'RE THE ONE WITH ALL THAT ENERGY.
YOUR BROTHER WAS SUCH A QUIET CHILD...
YOU WOULDN'T SIT STILL FOR A MOMENT.
YOU WERE RUNNING AROUND LIKE CRAZY.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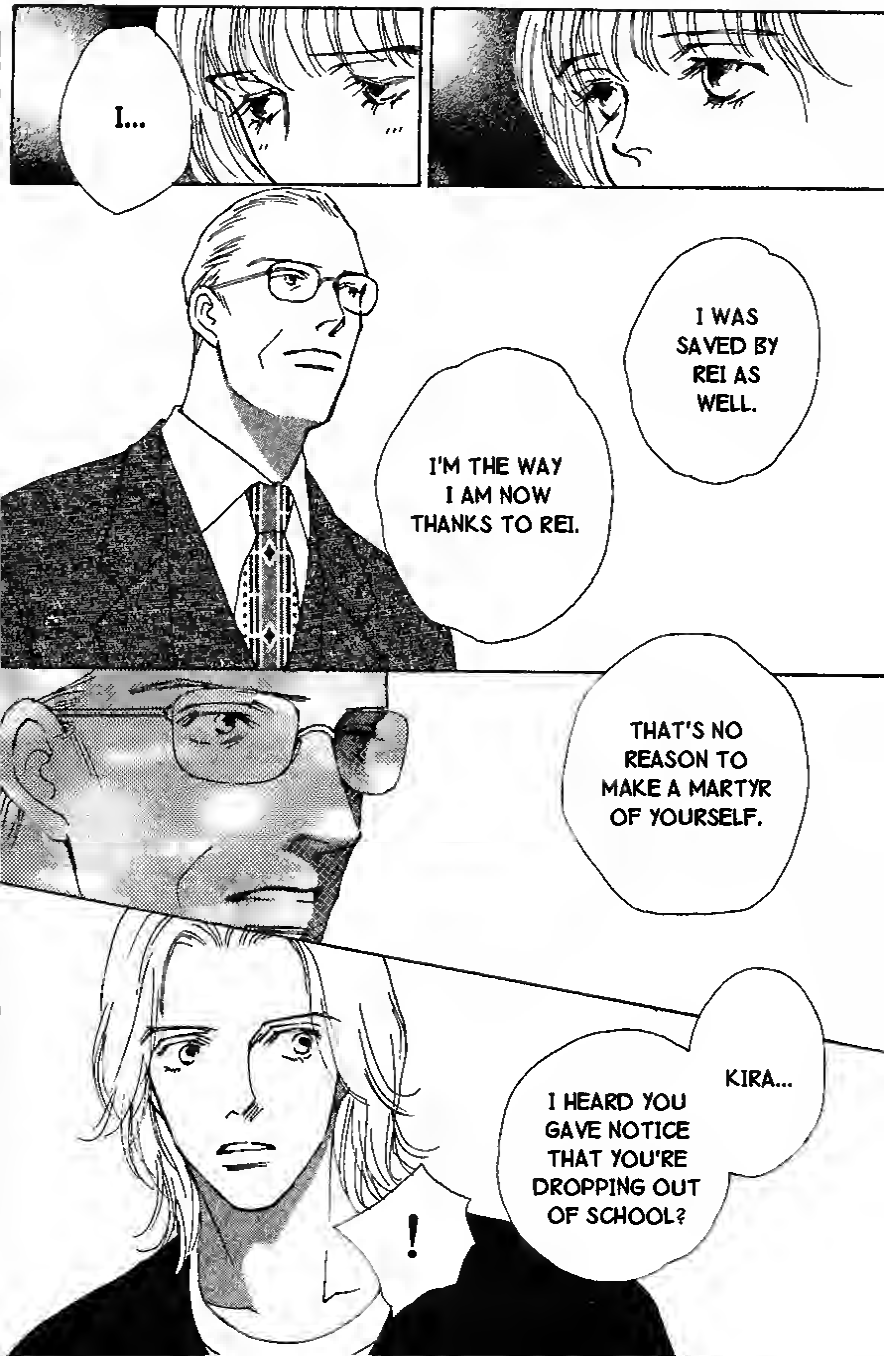
……
YOU WERE WALKING AROUND TEARING ALL THE SHOJI SCREENS IN THE PLACE.
WE COULDN'T OPEN THE NEXT DAY, THANKS TO YOU.
YOU MADE ME CRY BACK THEN!
ARE YOU TRYING TO PICK A FIGHT WITH ME?
THIS REALLY BRINGS BACK MEMORIES...
IT REMINDS ME OF YOUR FATHER BRINGING YOU AND YOUR LATE BROTHER AKIHIKO...
I WAS NEVER BROUGHT AROUND AS MUCH AS AKIHIKO.

MY OLD MAN LIKED MY HAPPY-GO-LUCKY BROTHER AKIHIKO MUCH MORE THAN ME, THE SERIOUS ONE.
THERE YOU GO AGAIN.
PARENTS LOVE ALL OF THEIR CHILDREN!
IT DEPENDS ON THE TIME AND PLACE...
AKIHIKO WAS BORN LATE, SO MY FATHER REALLY SPOILED HIM.

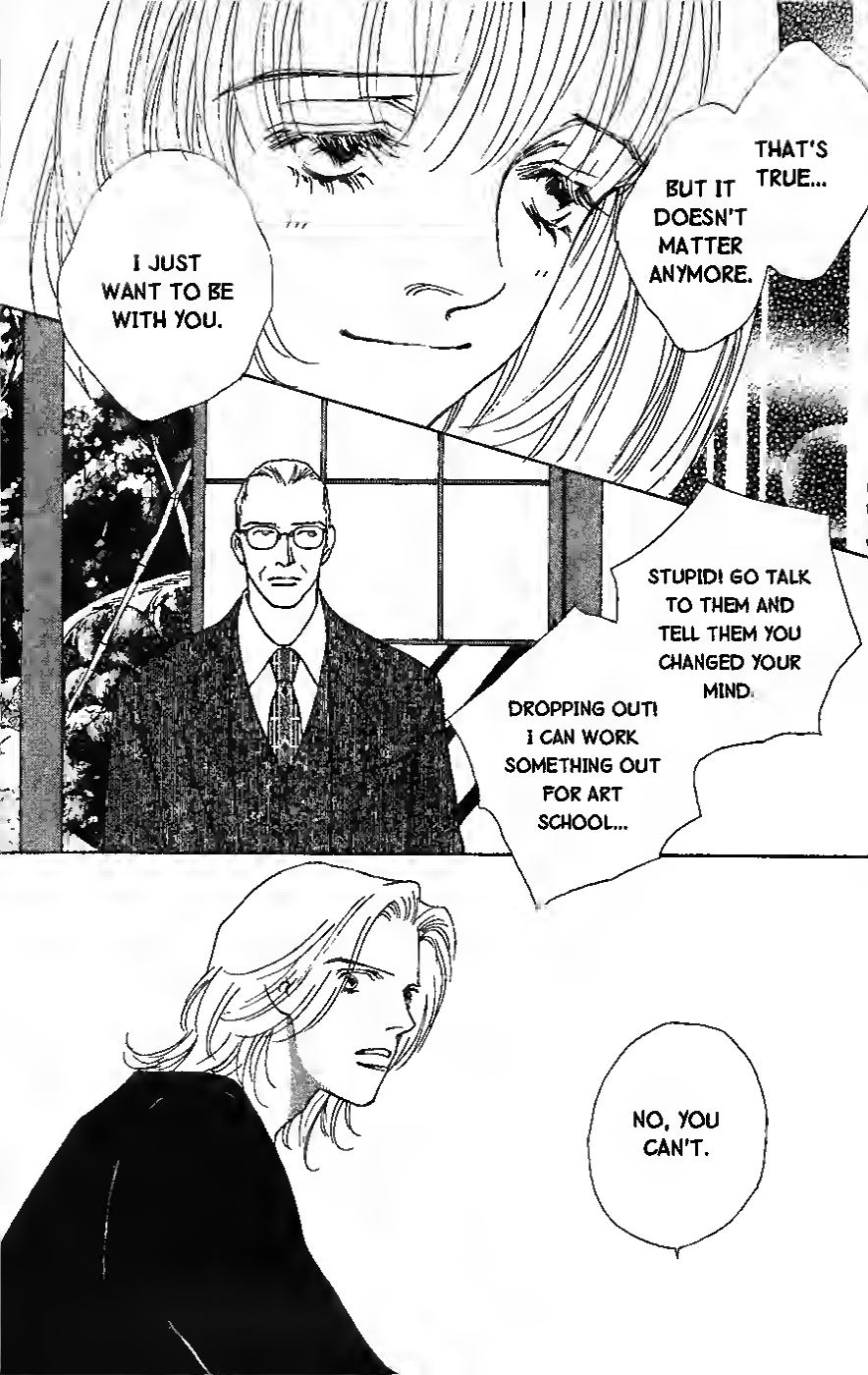
YES, YOU'RE RIGHT...
.....
AND HAD EVERYONE AROUND HIM, INCLUDING MY FATHER, WRAPPED AROUND HIS FINGER.
THANKS TO THAT, AKIHIKO WAS AS RECKLESS AS HE WANTED TO BE...
!
THAT AKIHIKO, WHO WAS SO CHEERFUL AND FULL OF LIFE, WOULD'VE DIED LIKE THAT...
WHO WOULD'VE THOUGHT...
GASP...
I'LL GO PREPARE YOUR DINNER RIGHT AWAY.
OH, GOODNESS. I'M JUST RAMBLING...

THE OWNER OF THIS RESTAURANT HAS KNOWN MY FATHER FOR YEARS.
THE CONVERSATION ALWAYS ENDS UP BEING ABOUT OLD TIMES.
WELL...
...LET'S LEAVE THAT BEHIND FOR NOW.
I'VE HEARD THE GENERAL STORY FROM REI.
KIRA...
DO YOU REALLY INTEND TO MARRY MY SON?

PLEASE...
DON'T TAKE THIS THE WRONG WAY.
!
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF OPPOSING WHAT YOU'RE DOING...
TO BE HONEST, I ALMOST FEEL GRATEFUL TO YOU.
THE FACT THAT REI HAS COME SO FAR FROM WHERE HE WAS MUST BE BECAUSE OF YOU...


I...
I WAS SAVED BY REI AS WELL.
I'M THE WAY I AM NOW THANKS TO REI.
THAT'S NO REASON TO MAKE A MARTYR OF YOURSELF.
KIRA...
I HEARD YOU GAVE NOTICE THAT YOU'RE DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL?
!

YOU'RE DROPPING OUT...
WHY?
BECAUSE YOU DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL FOR ME...
I CAN'T JUST KEEP GOING TO SCHOOL.
BUT THAT'S NO...
THEN WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO? WHAT ABOUT ART SCHOOL?
YOU WANTED TO GO TO ART SCHOOL SO BADLY.


I JUST WANT TO BE WITH YOU.
BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER ANYMORE.
THAT'S TRUE...
STUPID! GO TALK TO THEM AND TELL THEM YOU CHANGED YOUR MIND.
DROPPING OUT! I CAN WORK SOMETHING OUT FOR ART SCHOOL...
NO, YOU CAN'T.

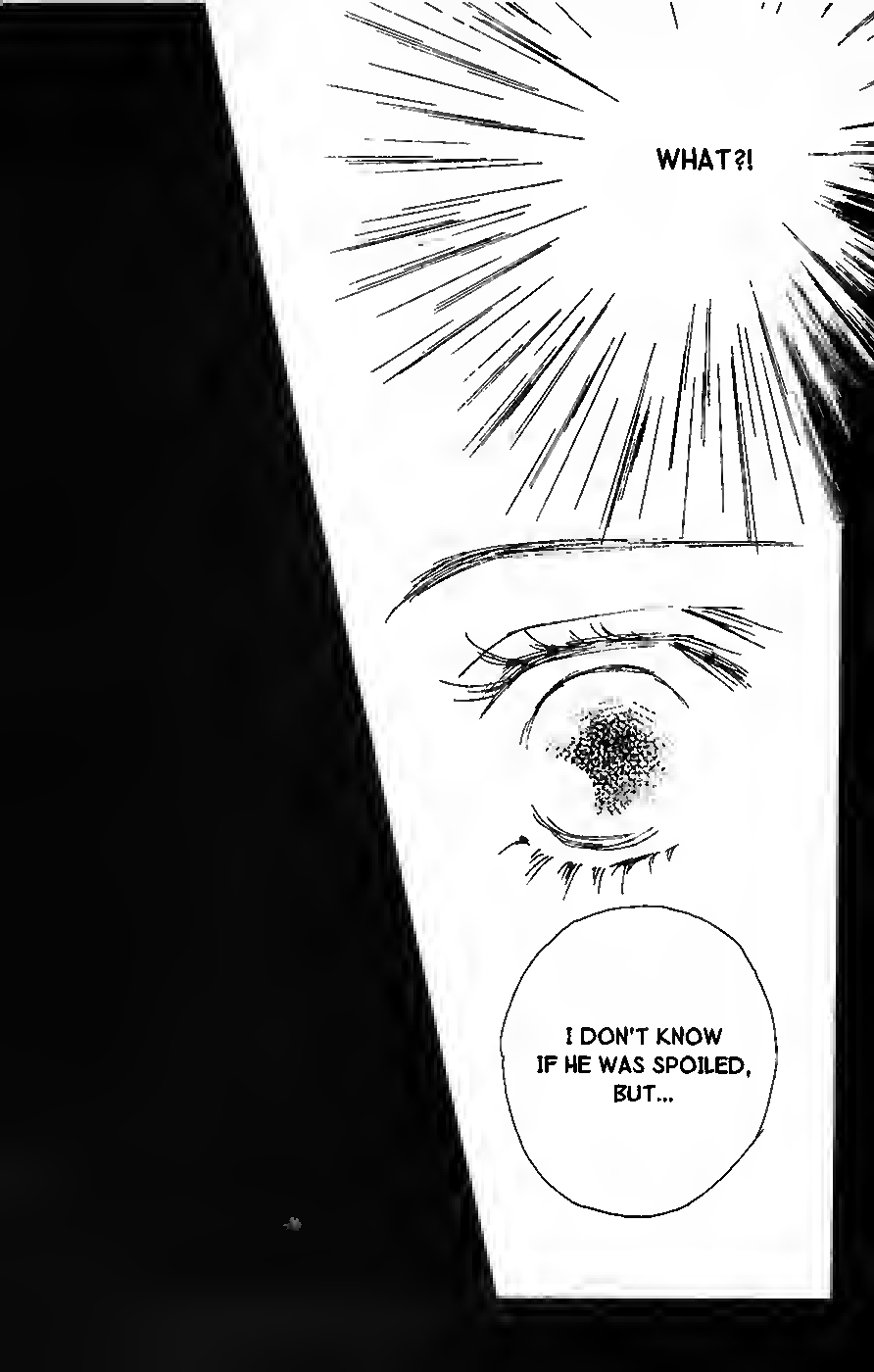
YOU'RE ONLY 18.
THERE'S NO WAY YOU COULD SUPPORT ANYONE BESIDES YOURSELF.

RIGHT...
YOU'RE RIGHT...
IT'S BECAUSE OF THE POWER OF YOUR MONEY...
...THAT WE'RE ABLE TO BE SO PEACEFUL RIGHT NOW.
THE ONLY REASON WE'RE BOTH HERE RIGHT NOW...
...IS YOU.

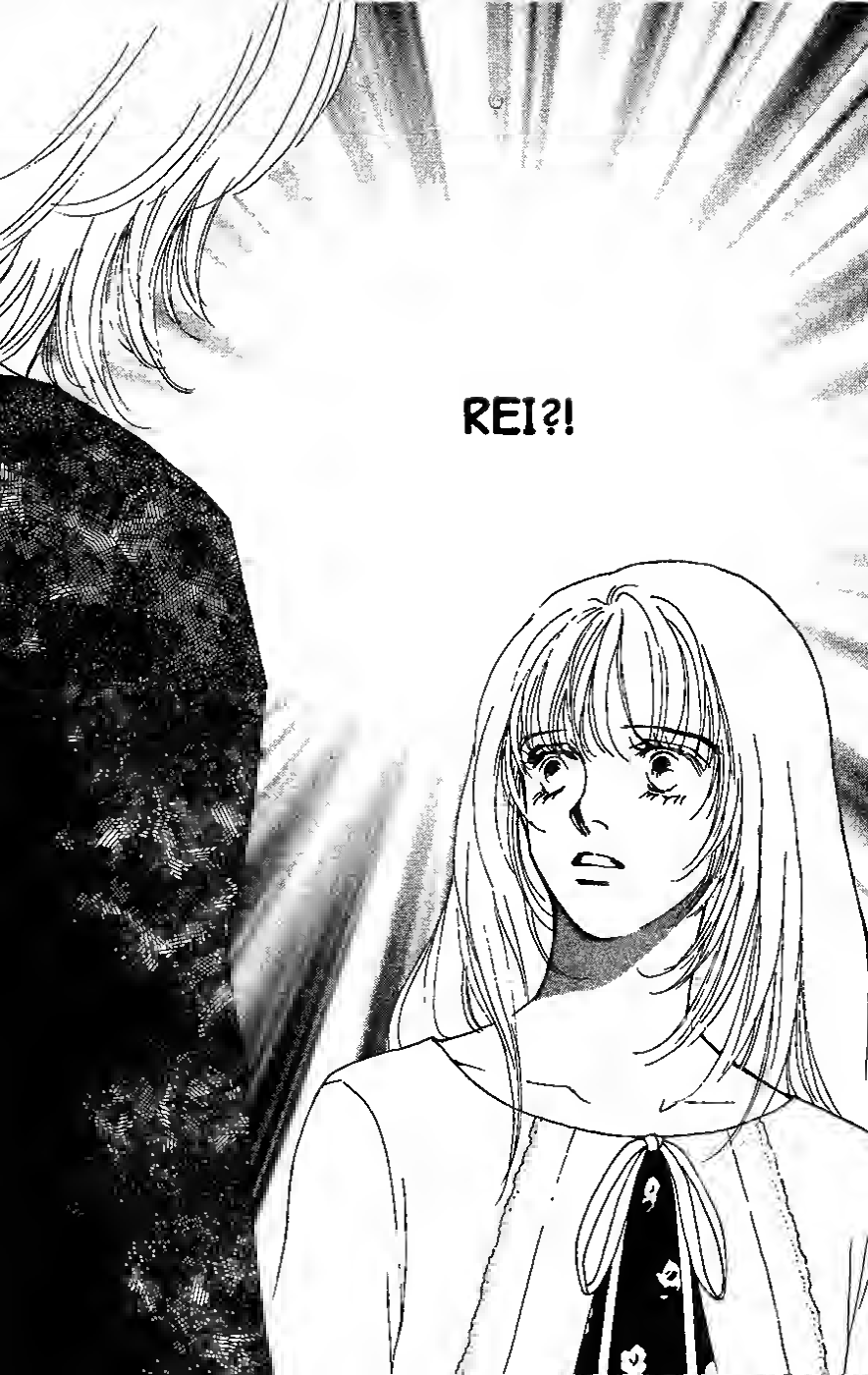
WHY DO YOU HAVE TO BE LIKE THAT?
THAT'S A BAD HABIT.
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN THIS WAY.
YOU ALWAYS TWIST THINGS AROUND.
WHY CAN'T YOU TAKE GOODWILL AS GOODWILL?

I WONDER WHERE YOU GOT THAT FROM?
REALLY...

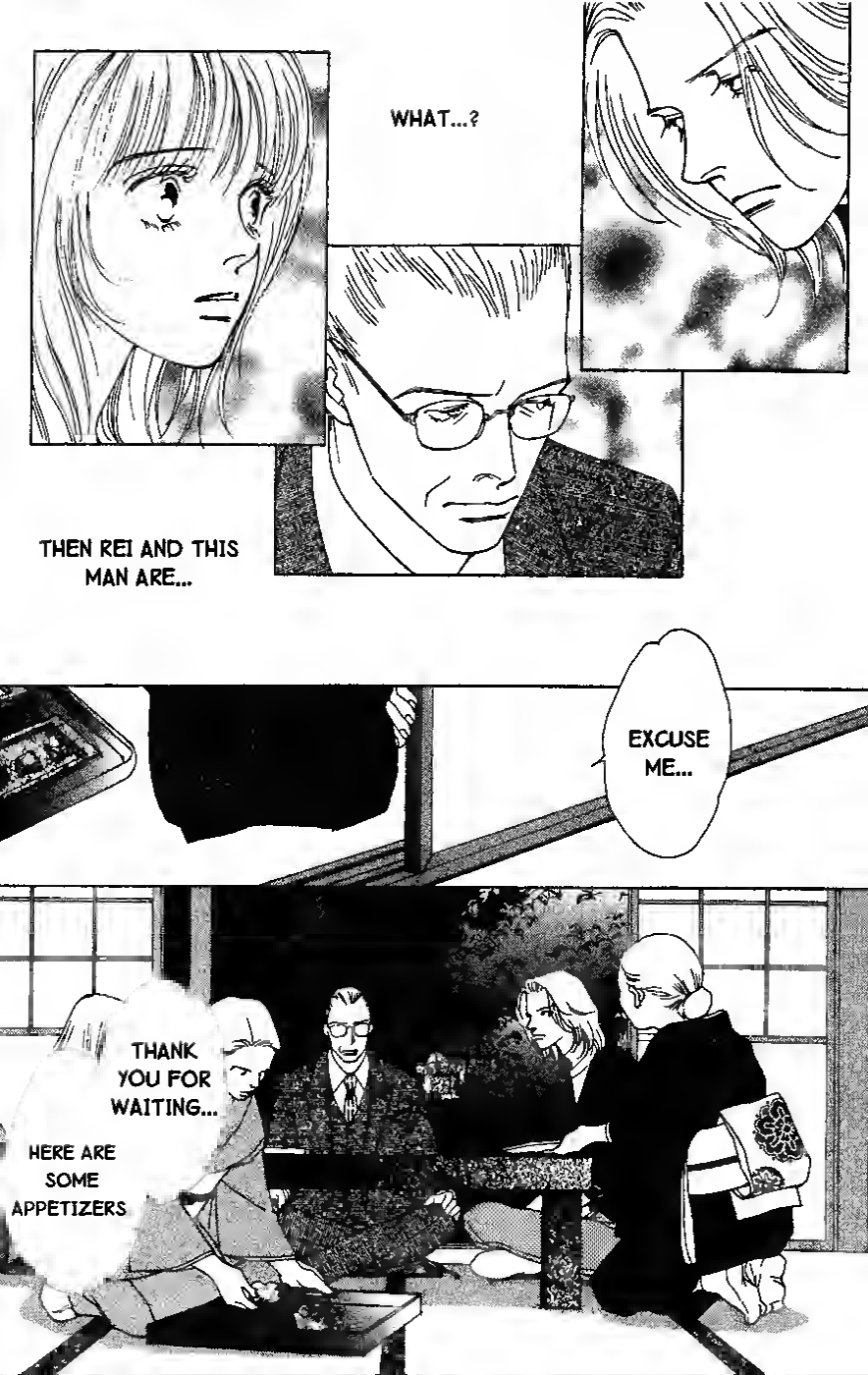
I PROBABLY GOT IT FROM YOUR BROTHER.


WHAT?!
I DON'T KNOW IF HE WAS SPOILED, BUT...

HE CERTAINLY SEEMED TO HAVE A FREE SPIRIT...
ENOUGH TO GO AND SLEEP WITH HIS OLDER BROTHER'S WIFE.
THAT AWFUL GUY'S BLOODLINE IS THE ONE RUNNING THROUGH ME...


REI?!

I'M THAT AWFUL GUY'S SON...


WHAT...?
THEN REI AND THIS MAN ARE...
EXCUSE ME...
THANK YOU FOR WAITING...
HERE ARE SOME APPETIZERS

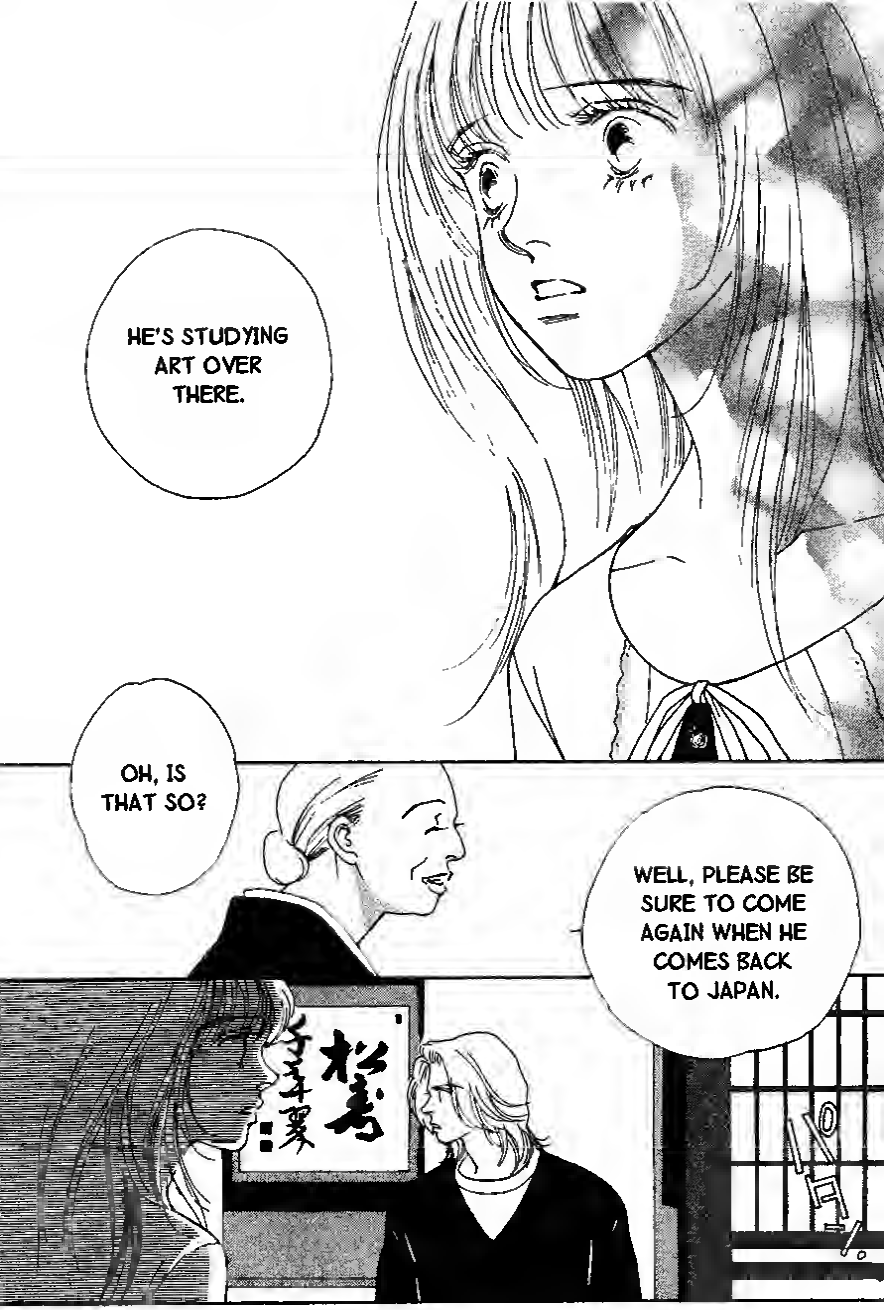
REI AND THIS MAN AREN'T STRANGERS.
THEY'RE BLOOD RELATIVES...
I'VE NEVER EATEN AT A PLACE LIKE THIS...
OH...
IS SOME-THING THE MATTER?
SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE FOOD?

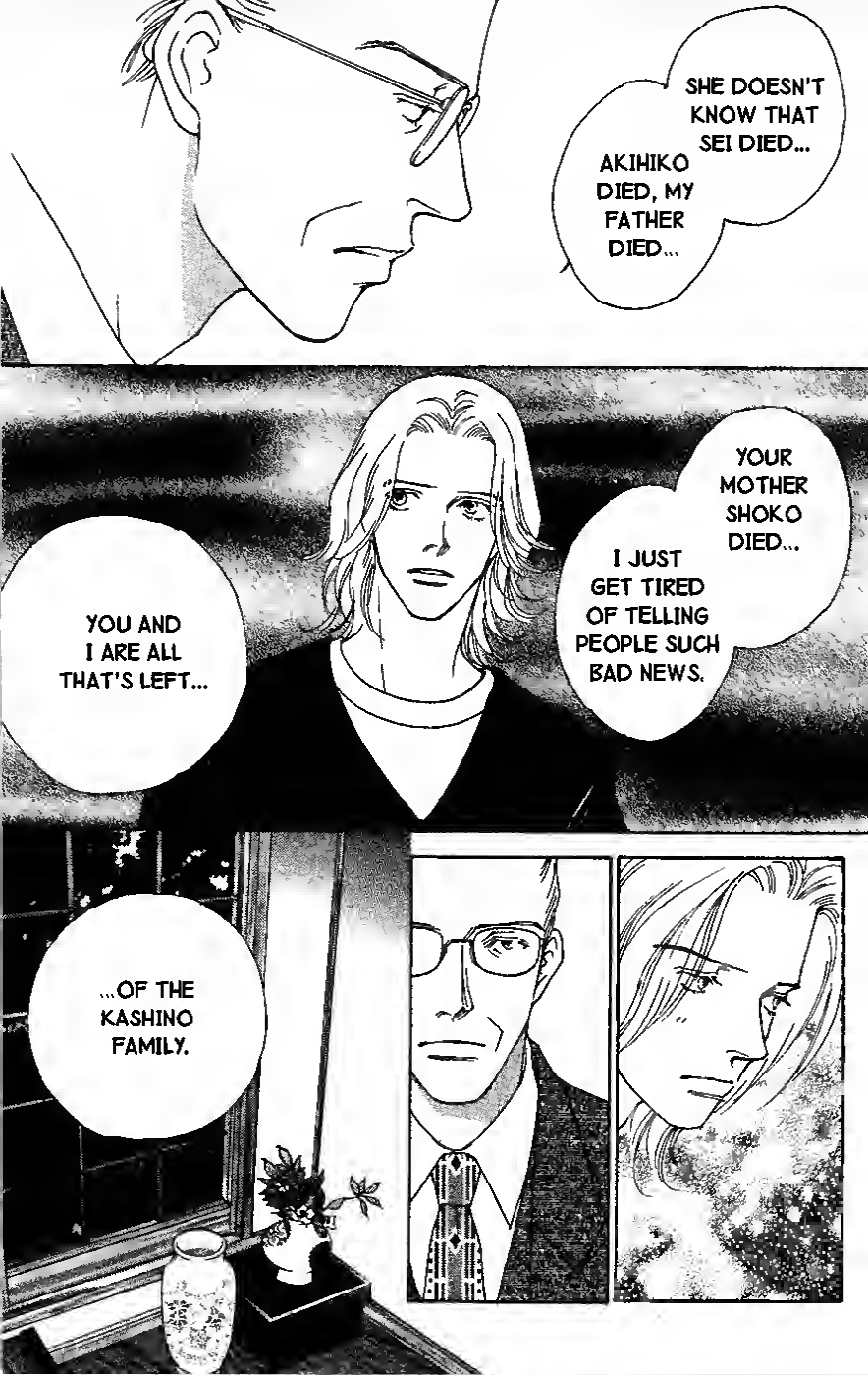
OH DEAR...
I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START...
DON'T BE SO FORMAL, JUST MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME.
PLEASE DON'T BE SHY...
.....
YOU'LL HAVE SOME TOO, WON'T YOU, REI?
YEAH, LET'S EAT. I'M HUNGRY.
WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO BRING SOME COLD SAKE?
YES, THAT'D BE NICE

I'M UNDER-AGE...
PLEASE BRING TWO GLASSES.
THAT'S ALL RIGHT. YOU DRINK ON YOUR OWN ANYWAY, RIGHT?
!

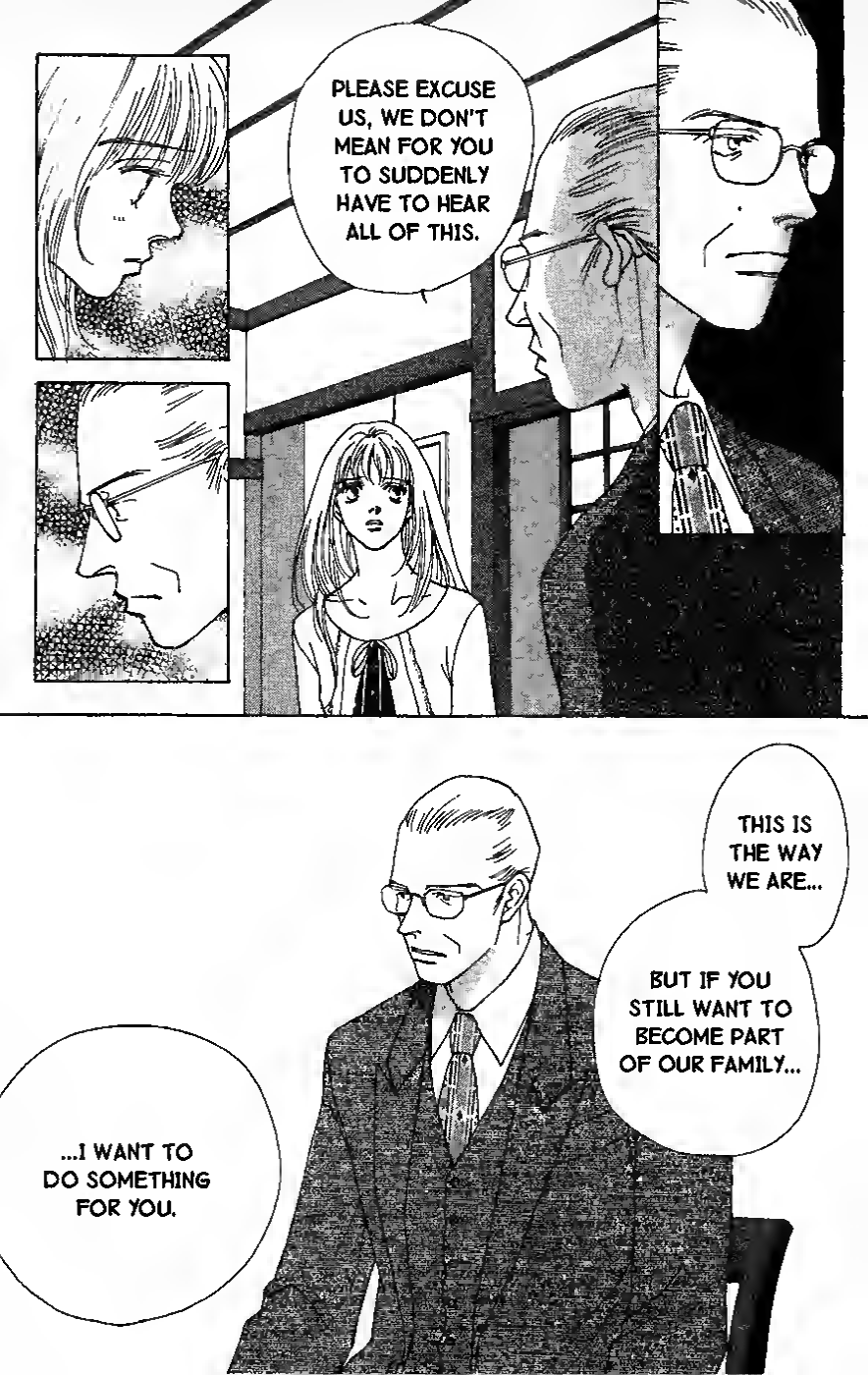
MA'AM, COULD YOU BRING A FORK?
YES, YES. RIGHT AWAY.
THAT'S RIGHT... YOU'RE NOT USED TO USING CHOPSTICKS.
SO YOU WERE LIVING IN AMERICA?
YEAH, HE WAS OVER THERE FOR EIGHT YEARS, SO HE DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT JAPANESE CUSTOMS.
WELL, FROM NOW ON, I'M GOING TO MAKE SURE HE LEARNS EVERYTHING FROM SCRATCH.
OH, AND HIS BROTHER IS BACK IN JAPAN TOO?

NO...HIS BROTHER SEI IS STILL IN AMERICA.

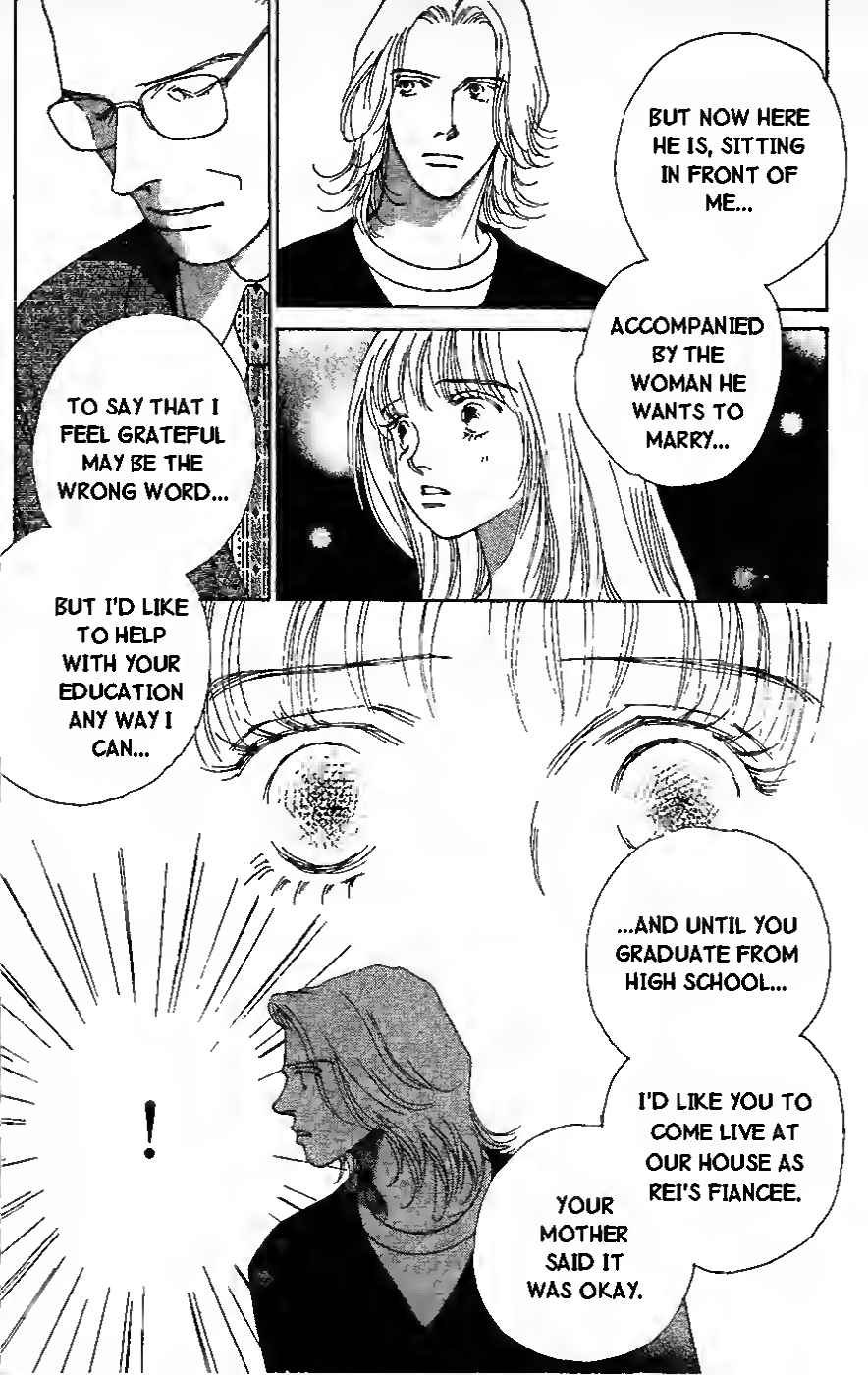

HE'S STUDYING ART OVER THERE.
OH, IS THAT SO?
WELL, PLEASE BE SURE TO COME AGAIN WHEN HE COMES BACK TO JAPAN.

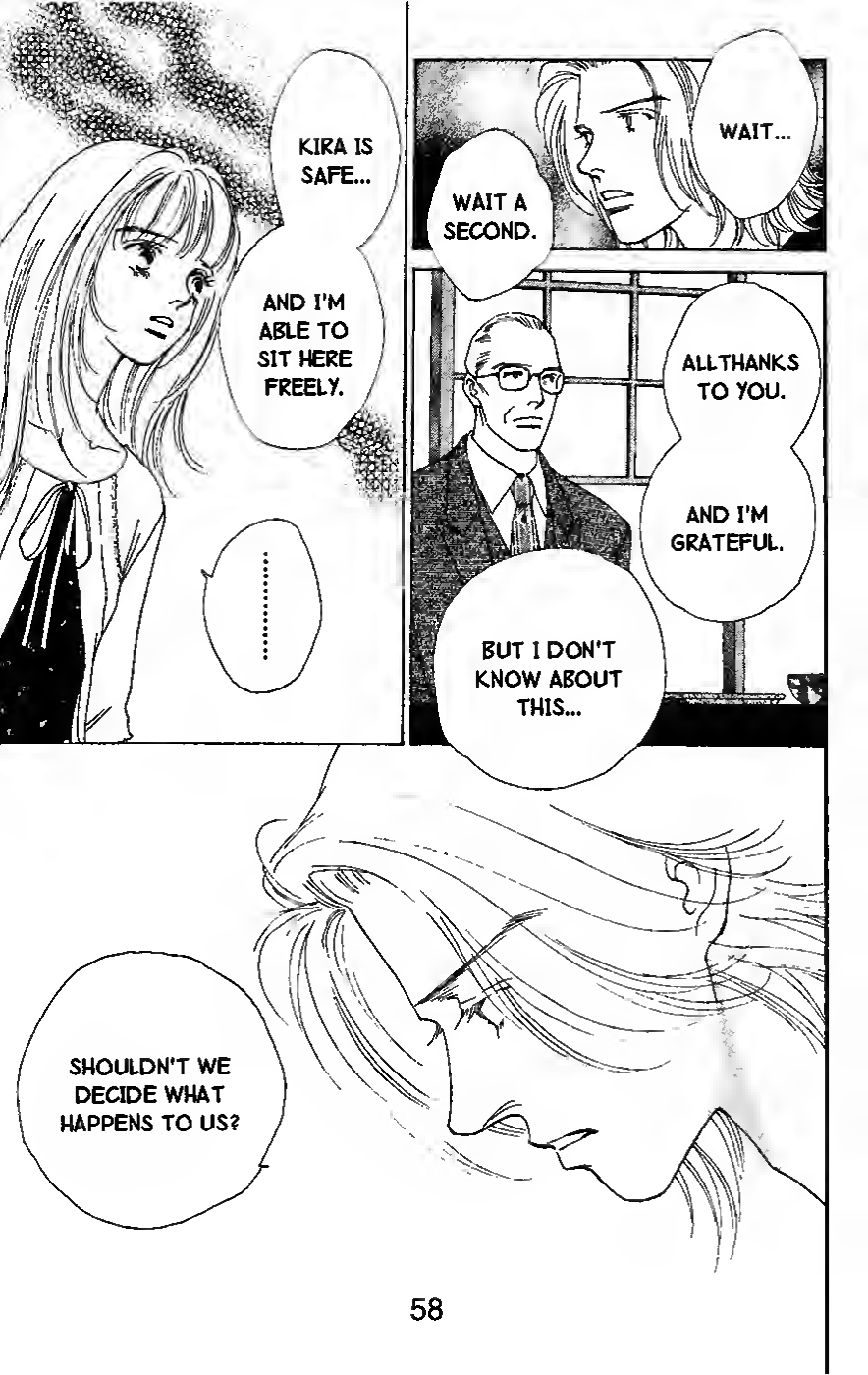

SHE DOESN'T KNOW THAT SEI DIED...
AKIHIKO DIED, MY FATHER DIED...
YOUR MOTHER SHOKO DIED...
I JUST GET TIRED OF TELLING PEOPLE SUCH BAD NEWS.
YOU AND I ARE ALL THAT'S LEFT...
...OF THE KASHINO FAMILY.

I DON'T WANT TO BE FIGHTING WITH MY OWN FAMILY IF I CAN HELP IT.
REI...

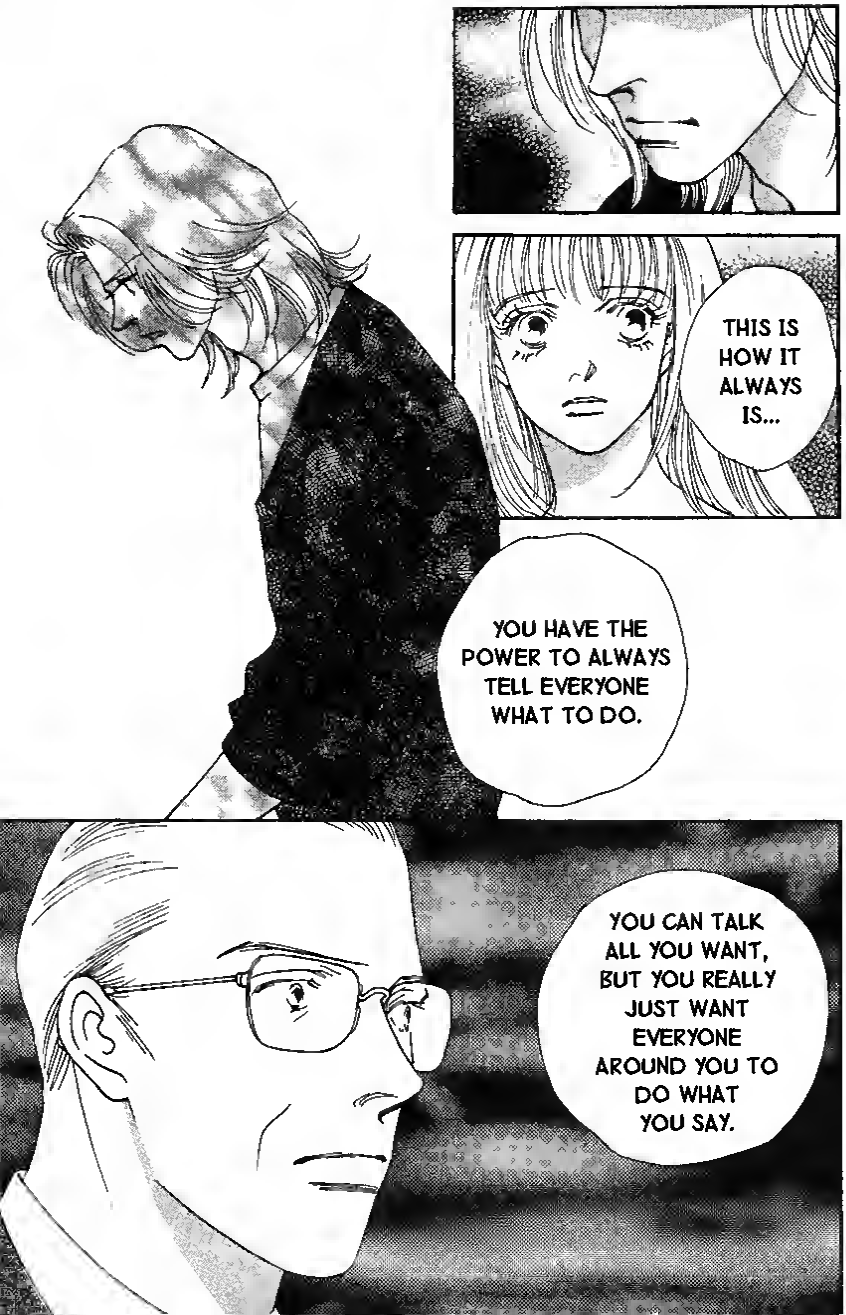

PLEASE EXCUSE US, WE DON'T MEAN FOR YOU TO SUDDENLY HAVE TO HEAR ALL OF THIS.
THIS IS THE WAY WE ARE...
BUT IF YOU STILL WANT TO BECOME PART OF OUR FAMILY...
...I WANT TO DO SOMETHING FOR YOU.

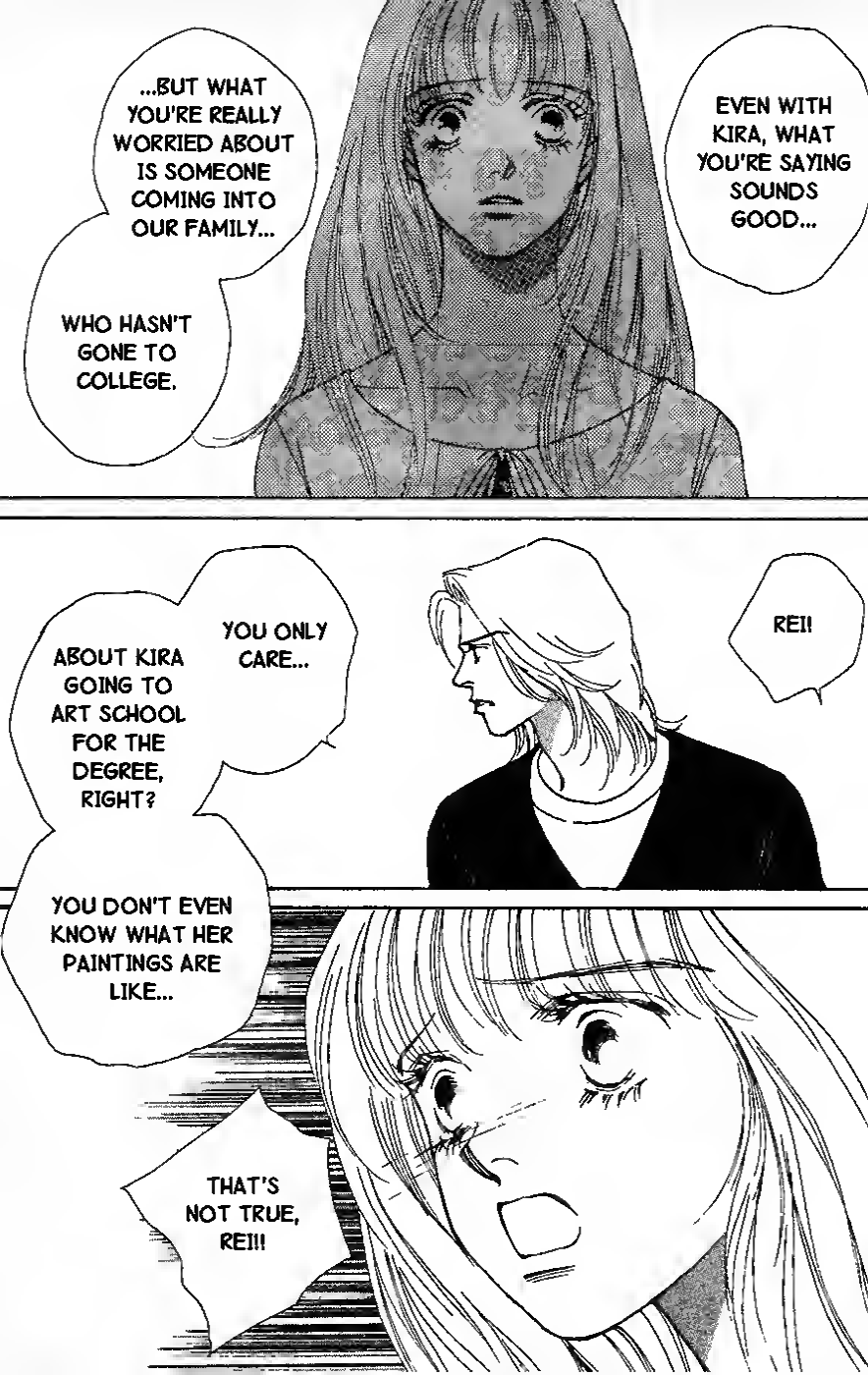
REI'S DEFINITELY CHANGED AFTER MEETING YOU.
HE LED SUCH A DEGENERATE LIFESTYLE BEFORE THAT...
FIGHTING, DRUGS, CALLS FROM THE POLICE ALMOST EVERY DAY...
AFTER SEI DIED, HE JUST DIDN'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT ANYTHING ANYMORE..
HE WENT THROUGH COUNSELING AND REHAB...
BUT IT WASN'T VERY EFFECTIVE.
TO BE HONEST, I THOUGHT THAT WAS GOING TO BE IT.

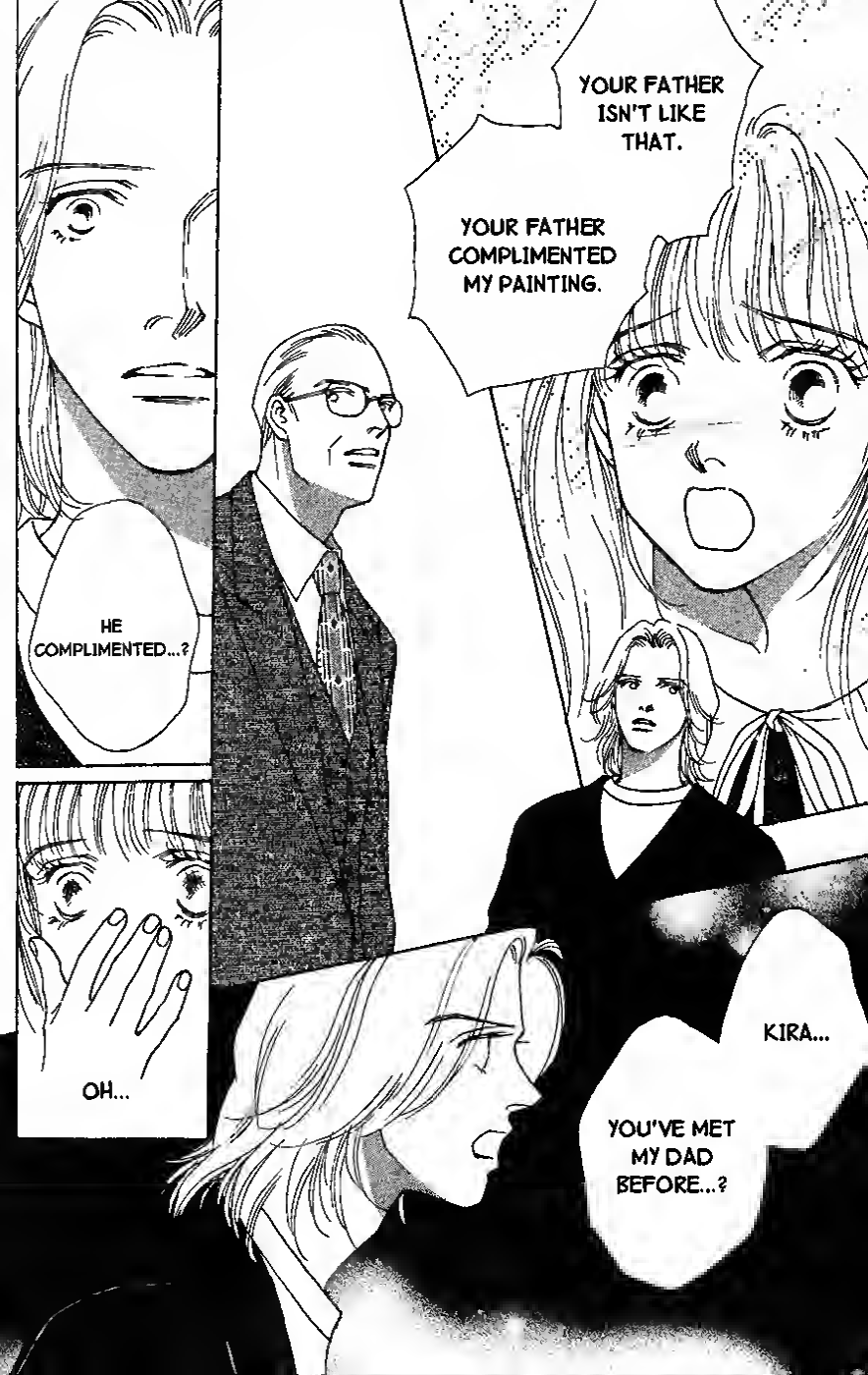

BUT NOW HERE HE IS, SITTING IN FRONT OF ME...
ACCOMPANIED BY THE WOMAN HE WANTS TO MARRY...
TO SAY THAT I FEEL GRATEFUL MAY BE THE WRONG WORD...
BUT I'D LIKE TO HELP WITH YOUR EDUCATION ANY WAY I CAN...
...AND UNTIL YOU GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL...
I'D LIKE YOU TO COME LIVE AT OUR HOUSE AS REI'S FIANCEE.
YOUR MOTHER SAID IT WAS OKAY.
!

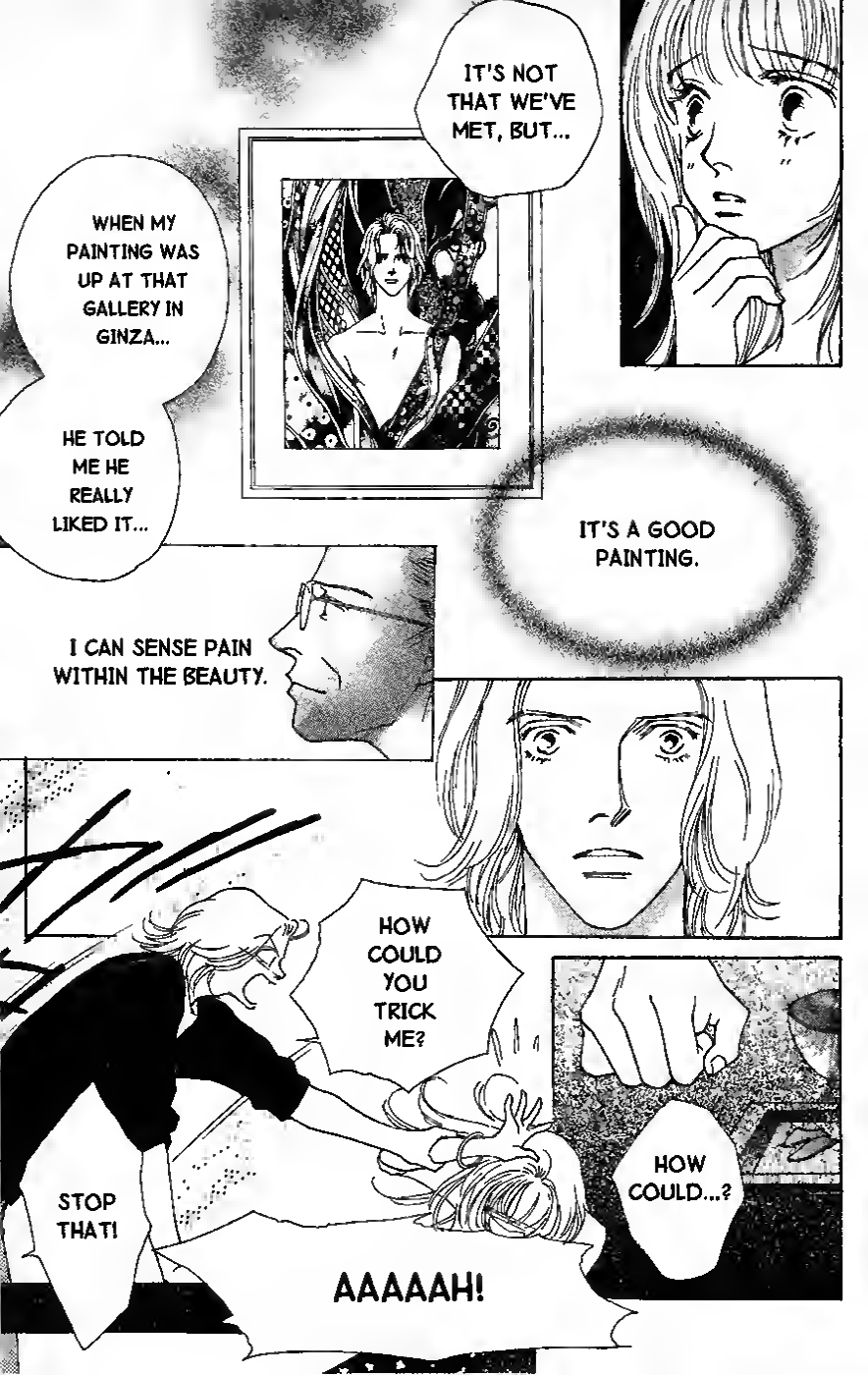

KIRA IS SAFE...
AND I'M ABLE TO SIT HERE FREELY.
.....
WAIT...
WAIT A SECOND.
ALL THANKS TO YOU.
AND I'M GRATEFUL.
BUT I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THIS...
SHOULDN'T WE DECIDE WHAT HAPPENS TO US?

NOW THAT'S YOUR PRIDE TALKING.
YOU CAN THINK WHATEVER YOU WANT...
ABOUT LIVING UNDER MY ROOF.
BUT TO COMPROMISE KIRA'S FUTURE BECAUSE OF YOUR PRIDE? I WON'T STAND FOR IT.
TAKE A MINUTE TO SERIOUSLY THINK ABOUT YOUR FUTURE.


THIS IS HOW IT ALWAYS IS...
YOU HAVE THE POWER TO ALWAYS TELL EVERYONE WHAT TO DO.
YOU CAN TALK ALL YOU WANT, BUT YOU REALLY JUST WANT EVERYONE AROUND YOU TO DO WHAT YOU SAY.


EVEN WITH KIRA, WHAT YOU'RE SAYING SOUNDS GOOD...
...BUT WHAT YOU'RE REALLY WORRIED ABOUT IS SOMEONE COMING INTO OUR FAMILY...
WHO HASN'T GONE TO COLLEGE.
REI!
YOU ONLY CARE...
ABOUT KIRA GOING TO ART SCHOOL FOR THE DEGREE, RIGHT?
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT HER PAINTINGS ARE LIKE...
THAT'S NOT TRUE, REI!!

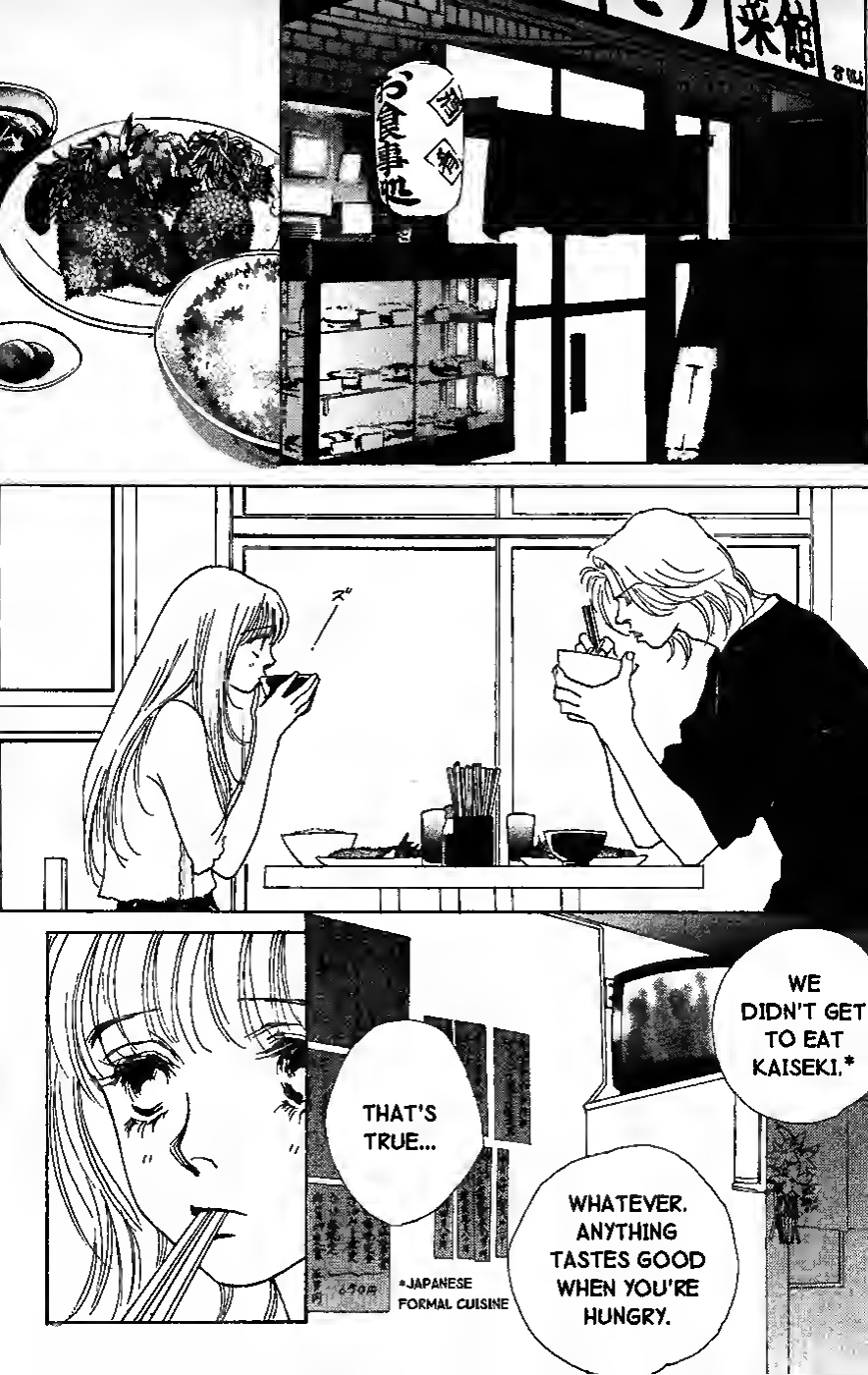

YOUR FATHER ISN'T LIKE THAT.
YOUR FATHER COMPLIMENTED MY PAINTING.
HE COMPLIMENTED...?
OH...
KIRA...
YOU'VE MET MY DAD BEFORE...?


IT'S NOT THAT WE'VE MET, BUT...
WHEN MY PAINTING WAS UP AT THAT GALLERY IN GINZA...
HE TOLD ME HE REALLY LIKED IT...
IT'S A GOOD PAINTING.
I CAN SENSE PAIN WITHIN THE BEAUTY.
HOW COULD YOU TRICK ME?
HOW COULD...?
STOP THAT!
AAAAAH!

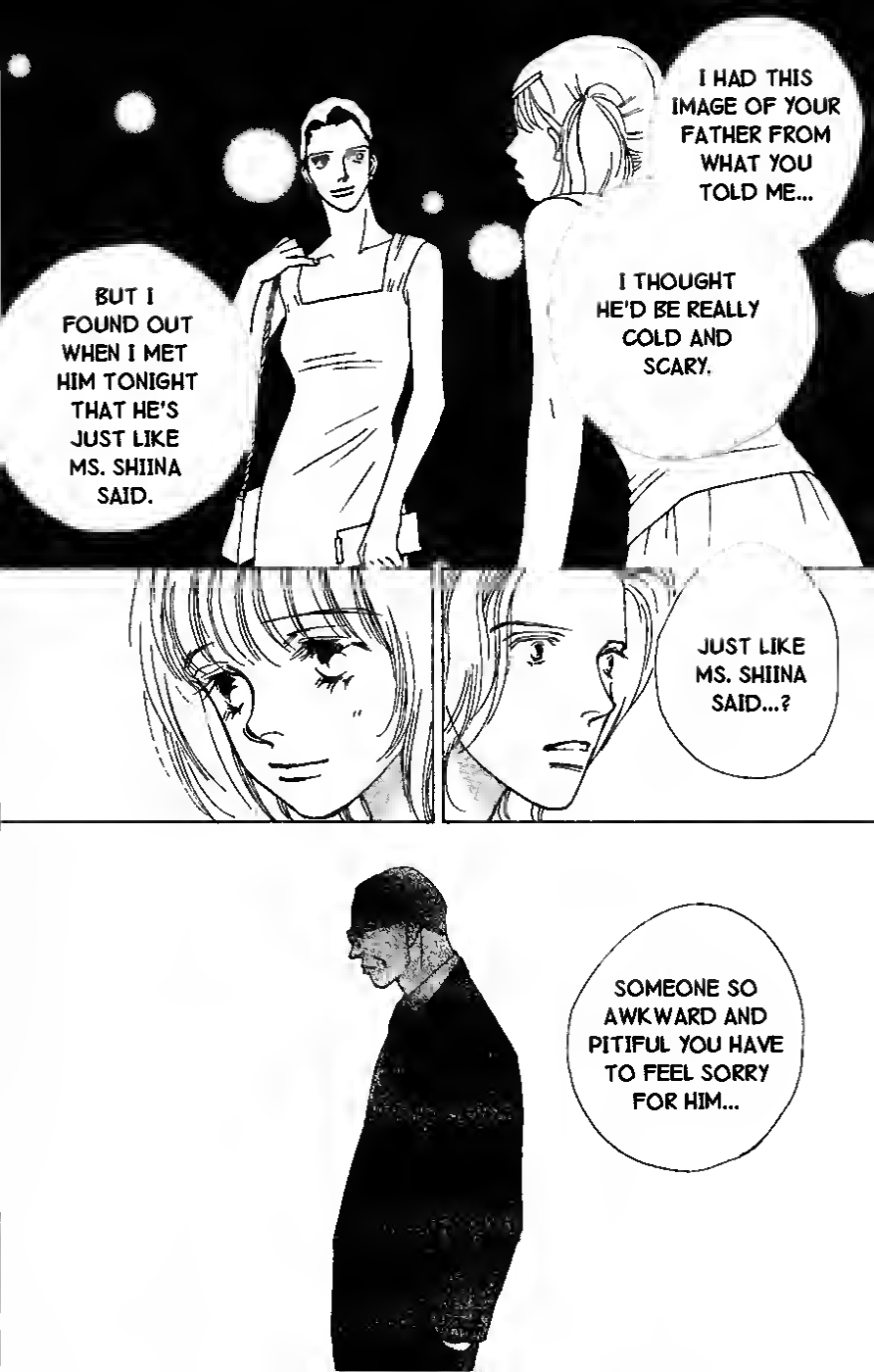
SHE DIDN'T KNOW THAT I WAS YOUR FATHER UNTIL SHE ARRIVED HERE.
I'M LEAVING.
DINNER IS GOING TO BE SERVED SOON.
GIVE ME A BREAK!
I'M NOT STAYING HERE FOR ANOTHER SECOND.
COME ON, KIRA...
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?!

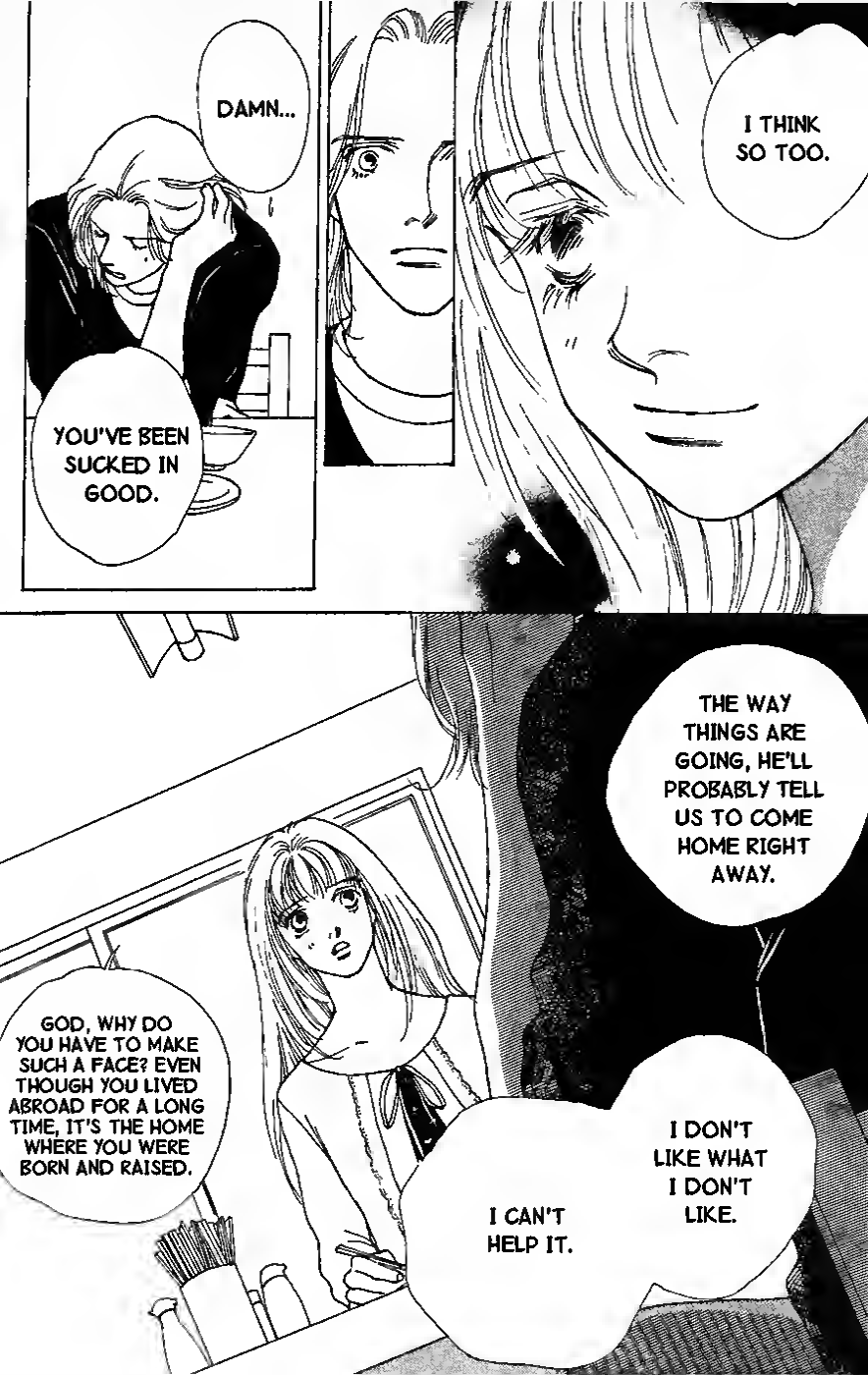
OH...
OH!
YOU'RE LEAVING ALREADY?
DINNER'S ABOUT TO BE SERVED.

WAIT UP, REI...
I'M HUNGRY.
HEY, REI...
I REALLY DIDN'T KNOW,,,
THAT THAT MAN WAS YOUR FATHER.
IF I'D KNOWN, I DEFINITELY WOULD'VE TOLD YOU.


WE DIDN'T GET TO EAT KAISEKI.*
THAT'S TRUE...
WHATEVER. ANYTHING TASTES GOOD WHEN YOU'RE HUNGRY.
*JAPANESE FORMAL CUISINE

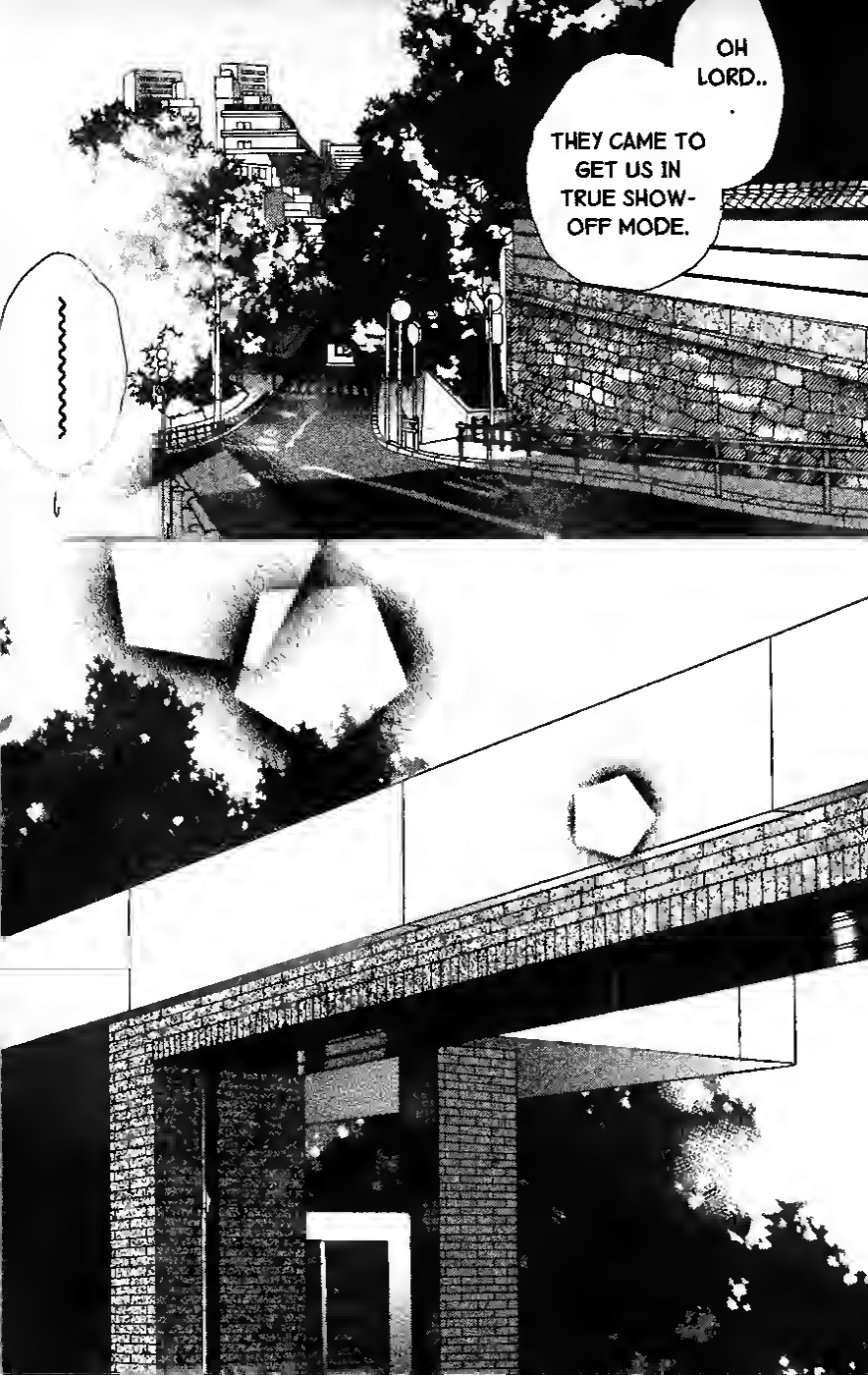
YOU AND THAT MAN ARE RELATED...?
SO HE'S REALLY YOUR UNCLE?
THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT EVEN WORSE.
OUR INVOLVEMENT IS TOO COMPLICATED.
BUT YOU DO LOOK A LITTLE ALIKE.
STOP IT!


I HAD THIS IMAGE OF YOUR FATHER FROM WHAT YOU TOLD ME...
I THOUGHT HE'D BE REALLY COLD AND SCARY.
BUT I FOUND OUT WHEN I MET HIM TONIGHT THAT HE'S JUST LIKE MS. SHIINA SAID.
JUST LIKE MS. SHIINA SAID...?
SOMEONE SO AWKWARD AND PITIFUL YOU HAVE TO FEEL SORRY FOR HIM...


DAMN...
YOU'VE BEEN SUCKED IN GOOD.
I THINK SO TOO.
THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING, HE'LL PROBABLY TELL US TO COME HOME RIGHT AWAY.
GOD, WHY DO YOU HAVE TO MAKE SUCH A FACE? EVEN THOUGH YOU LIVED ABROAD FOR A LONG TIME, IT'S THE HOME WHERE YOU WERE BORN AND RAISED.
I CAN'T HELP IT.
I DON'T LIKE WHAT I DON'T LIKE.

THE FOYER IS ABOUT THE SIZE OF THIS RESTAURANT.
TOO BIG...? HOW BIG IS IT?
UM, I GUESS...
HONESTLY, THAT HOUSE IS JUST TOO BIG.
!
.....

DAMN!
IT'S A BLACK MERCEDES ...
...AND WITH A DRIVER.
WHAT THE HELL ARE THEY THINKING...?
.....


OH LORD..
THEY CAME TO GET US IN TRUE SHOW-OFF MODE.

WELCOME HOME, SIR.

.....
WHERE'S MY FATHER?
HE CALLED A LITTLE EARLIER TO SAY HE WOULD BE COMING HOME LATE.
はっ
REI, YOUR SHOES ...
IT'S OKAY...
WE HAVE A LOT OF FOREIGN GUESTS, SO YOU CAN KEEP YOUR SHOES ON AT OUR HOUSE.

PLEASE, COME ON IN.
I'LL BE RIGHT OVER WITH SOME DRINKS.
まは…
KIRA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HURRY UP!
そ?…
WHOA, IT'S LIKE THE LOBBY OF A HOTEL.

WHAT'S WRONG?
YOU WANT TO GO TO MY ROOM?
I'M JUST SORT OF OVER-WHELMED...
I THINK I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY YOU DON'T LIKE IT HERE.

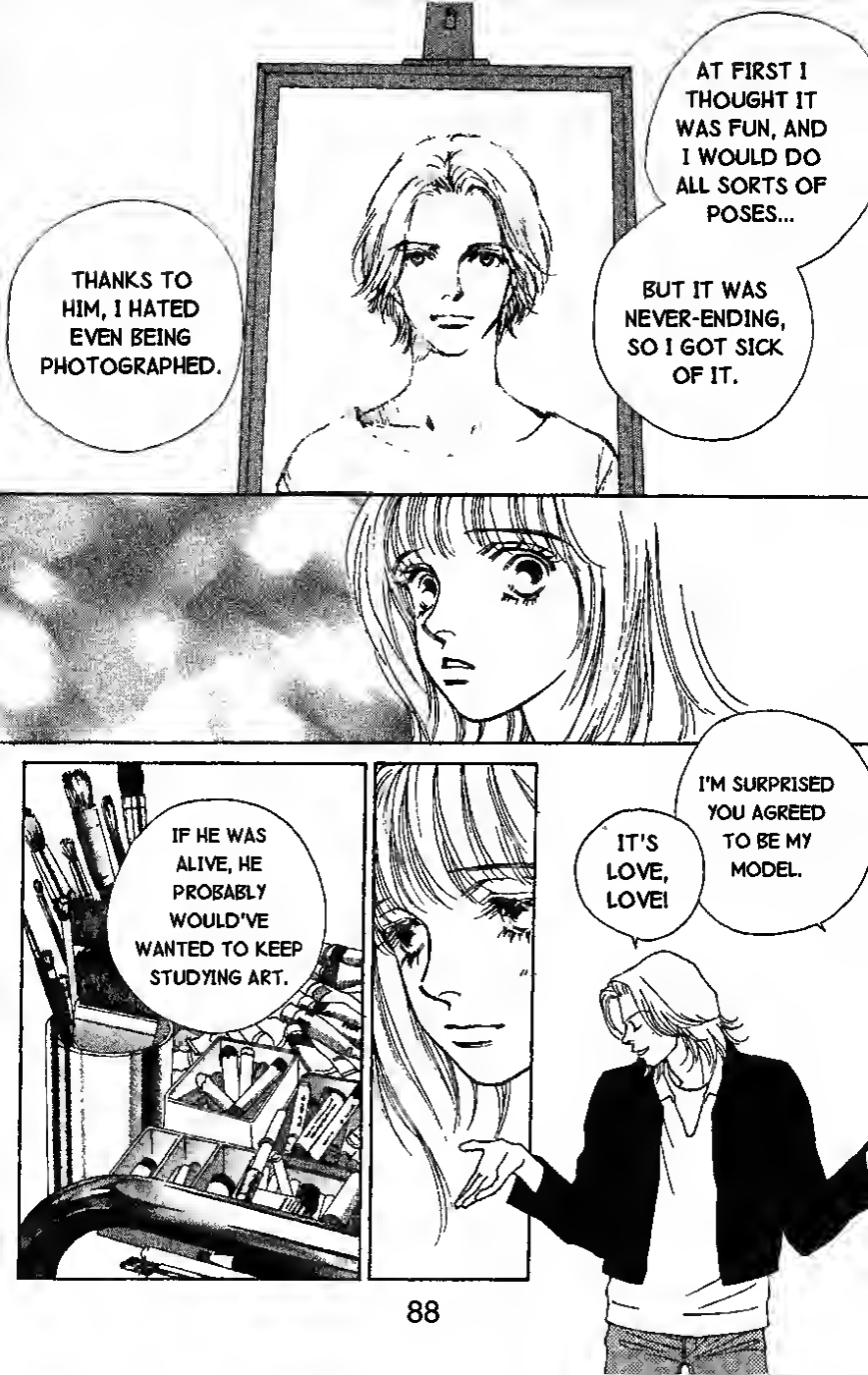
HEY, DO YOU HAVE ANY PHOTO ALBUMS?
IT WAS REALLY JUST A PLACE WHERE I SLEPT ...
YOU REALLY DON'T HAVE ANYTHING...
WHEN IT CAME DOWN TO IT, THE GARAGE WAS MORE LIKE MY ROOM.
PROBABLY, BUT...

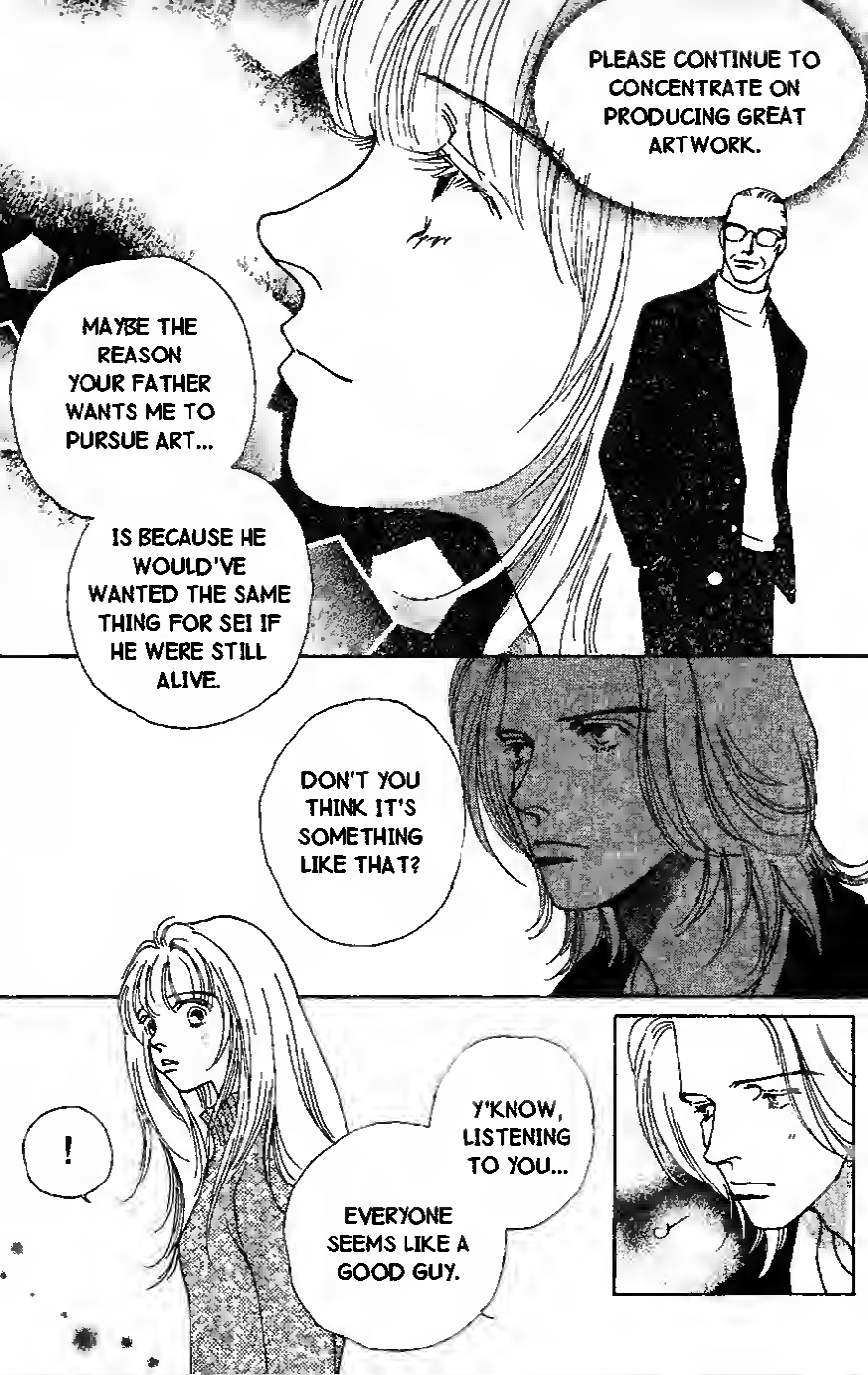
THEY'RE PROB-ABLY IN SEI'S ROOM.
I'LL GO LOOK.
!
OH....
HEY!
C-CAN I GO TO SEI'S ROOM TOO?
OH...NOT A GOOD IDEA?
!
.....
NO...THAT'S NOT IT.

IT'S JUST THAT HIS ROOM IS PRETTY UNIQUE...
?
IT'S DEFINITELY NOT ME, TASTE-WISE.
WELL, YOU'RE AN ARTIST TOO...
SO MAYBE YOU'LL UNDERSTAND IT MORE...
!

MARS

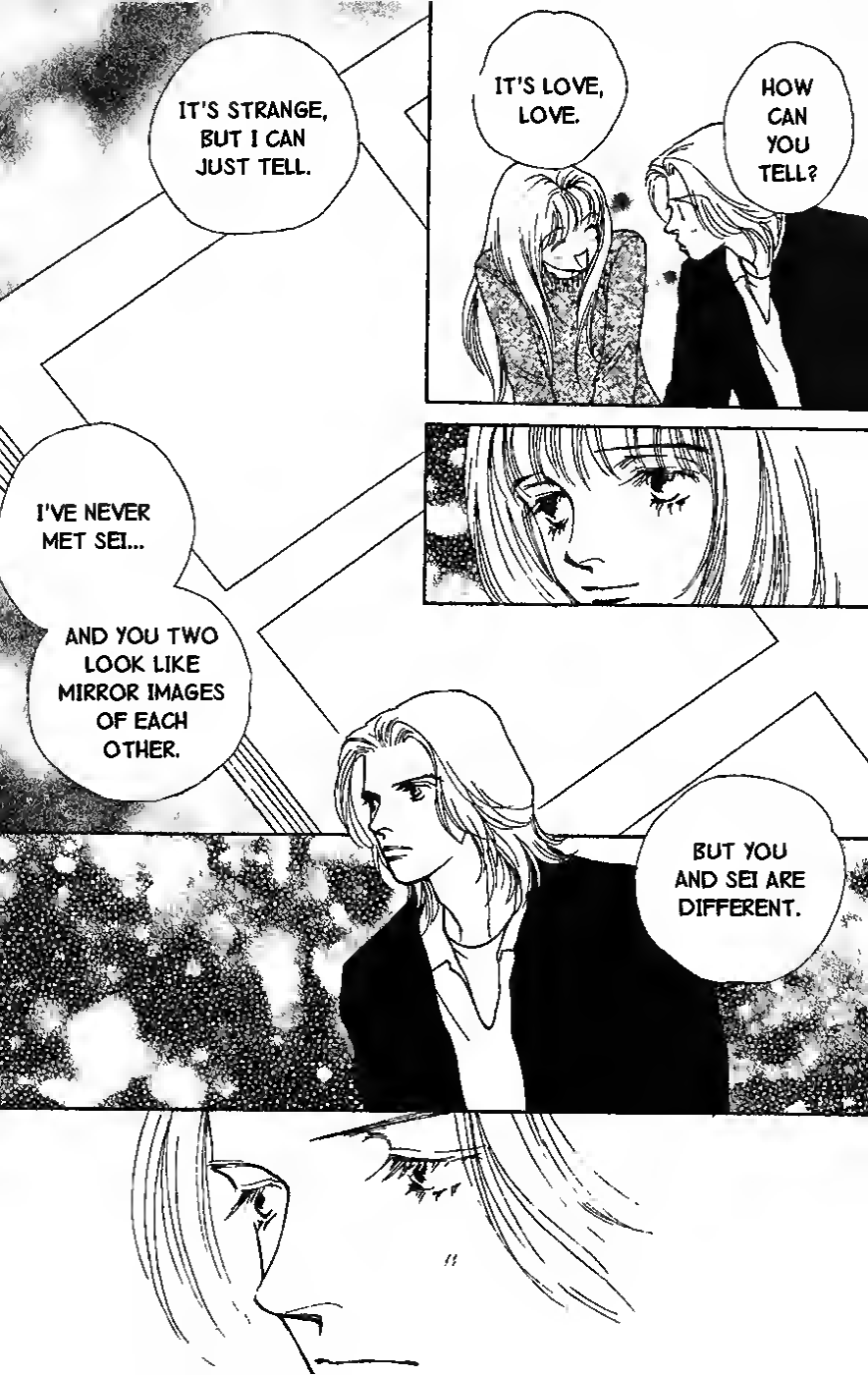
IS THIS ALL YOU...?
WOW...
DID SEI PAINT ALL OF THESE?
PRETTY BAD TASTE, RIGHT? THEY'RE PORTRAITS..
ALL OVER HIS WALLS OF A PERSON WHO LOOKS JUST LIKE HIM.
HE ALWAYS USED ME AS HIS MODEL WHEN HE PAINTED...
I WAS ALWAYS AROUND, SO MAYBE IT WAS JUST CONVENIENT.

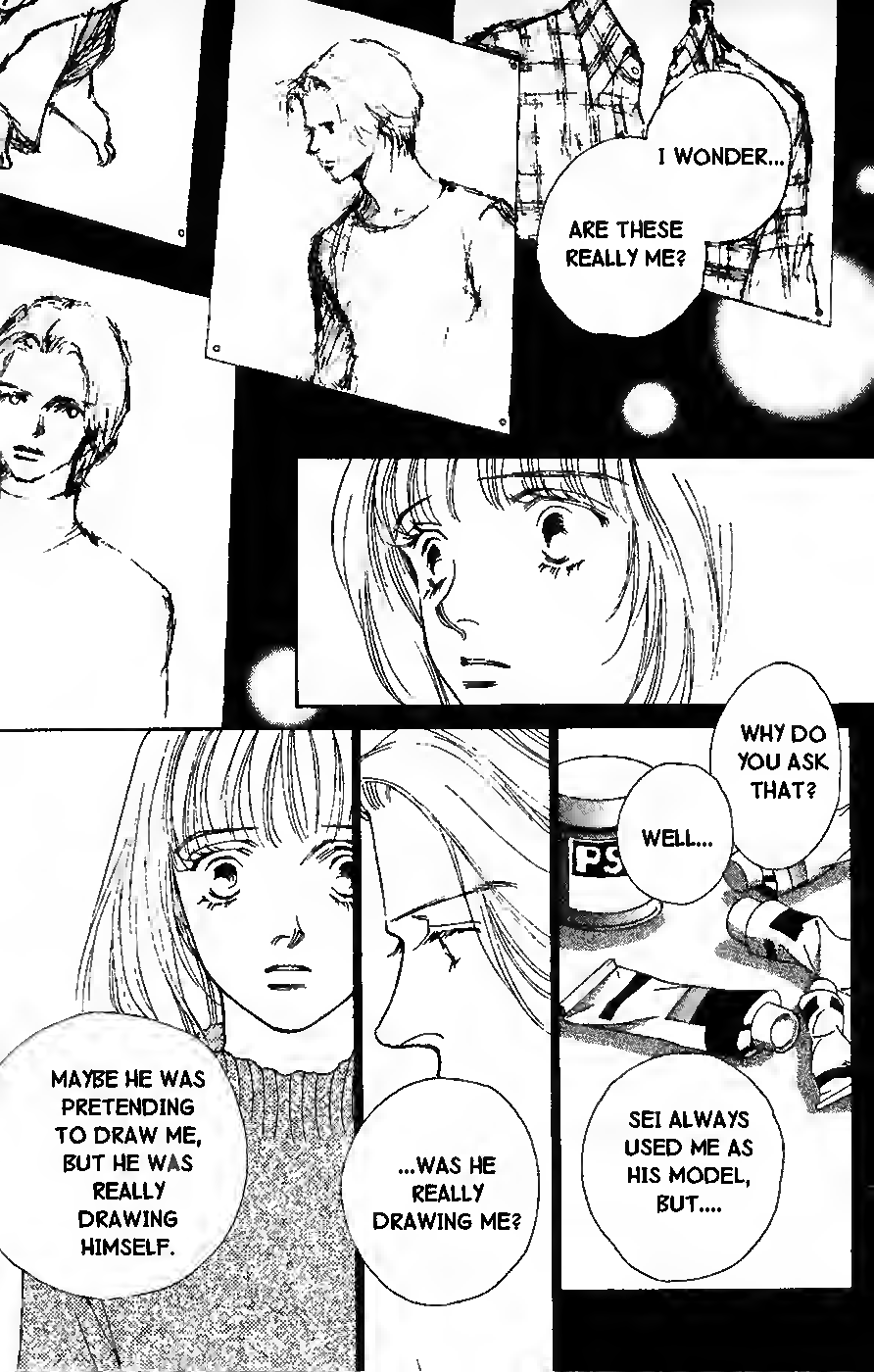

AT FIRST I THOUGHT IT WAS FUN, AND I WOULD DO ALL SORTS OF POSES...
BUT IT WAS NEVER-ENDING, SO I GOT SICK OF IT.
THANKS TO HIM, I HATED EVEN BEING PHOTOGRAPHED.
IF HE WAS ALIVE, HE PROBABLY WOULD'VE WANTED TO KEEP STUDYING ART.
I'M SURPRISED YOU AGREED TO BE MY MODEL.
IT'S LOVE, LOVE!


PLEASE CONTINUE TO CONCENTRATE ON PRODUCING GREAT ARTWORK.
MAYBE THE REASON YOUR FATHER WANTS ME TO PURSUE ART...
IS BECAUSE HE WOULD'VE WANTED THE SAME THING FOR SEI IF HE WERE STILL ALIVE.
DON'T YOU THINK IT'S SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
Y'KNOW, LISTENING TO YOU...
EVERYONE SEEMS LIKE A GOOD GUY.
!

IT'S NOT JUST THAT HE SEEMS THAT WAY. YOUR FATHER REALLY IS A GOOD GUY.
OH, OKAY, YES, YES.
THERE'S NO POINT TELLING A GIRL WHO'S GOT AN OEDIPUS COMPLEX.
WHAT DID YOU SAY?
NO... IT'S NOTHING.
UMMM, WHICH ALBUMS ARE THEY?!

OH MY GOD, YOU'RE SO CUTE!
HOW OLD ARE YOU HERE?
TWELVE... I THINK.
WHAT ABOUT HERE?
UMMM, EIGHT OR NINE...
CAN YOU TELL WHICH ONE IS ME?
YEAH!
THIS IS YOU.
AND THIS IS SEI.

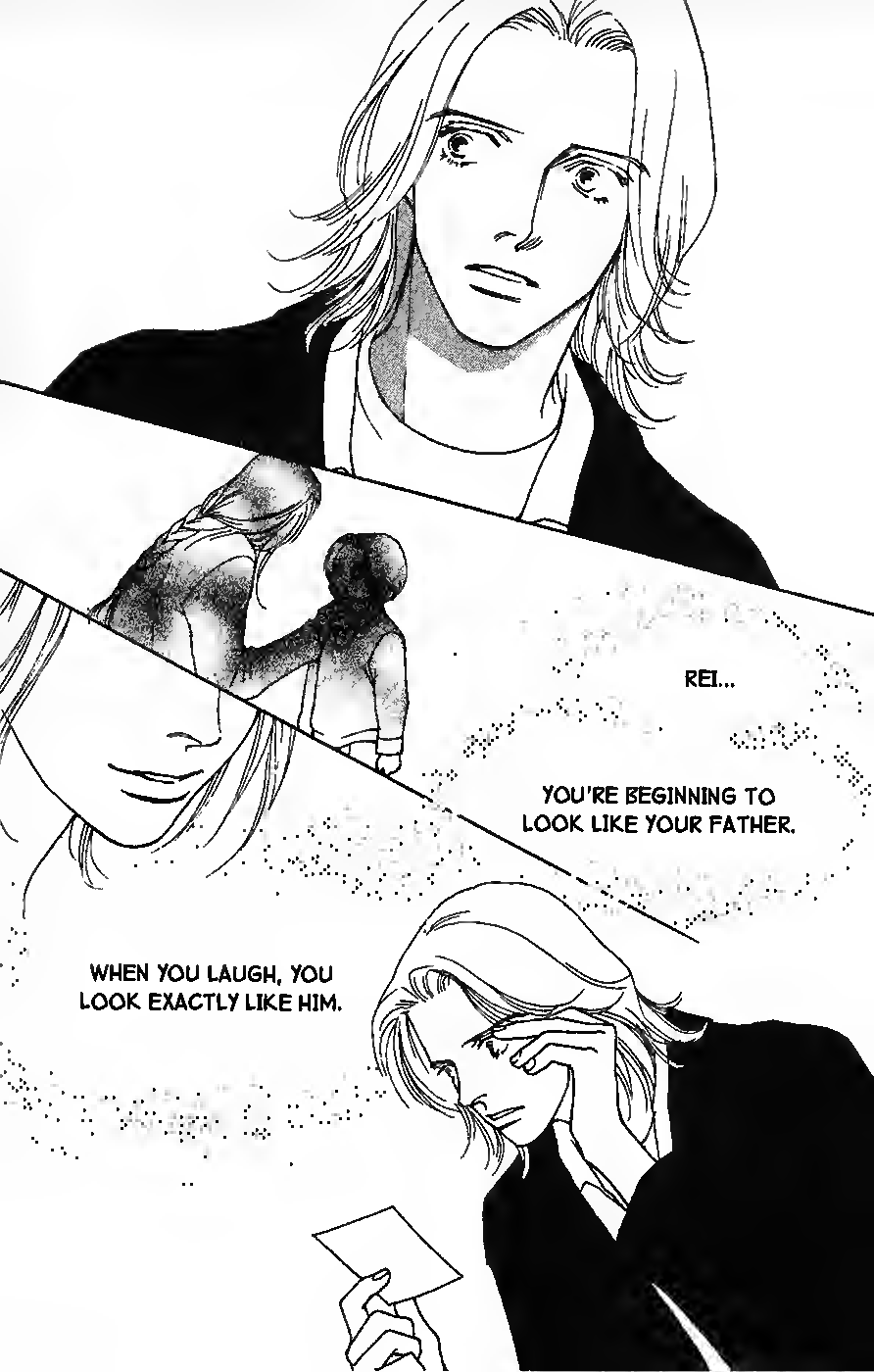

IT'S STRANGE, BUT I CAN JUST TELL.
IT'S LOVE, LOVE.
HOW CAN YOU TELL?
I'VE NEVER MET SEI...
AND YOU TWO LOOK LIKE MIRROR IMAGES OF EACH OTHER.
BUT YOU AND SEI ARE DIFFERENT.


I WONDER...
ARE THESE REALLY ME?
WHY DO YOU ASK THAT?
WELL...
SEI ALWAYS USED ME AS HIS MODEL, BUT....
...WAS HE REALLY DRAWING ME?
MAYBE HE WAS PRETENDING TO DRAW ME, BUT HE WAS REALLY DRAWING HIMSELF.

WE LOOKED EXACTLY THE SAME ON THE OUTSIDE.
WELL, IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER.
REI...THIS PICTURE!
110

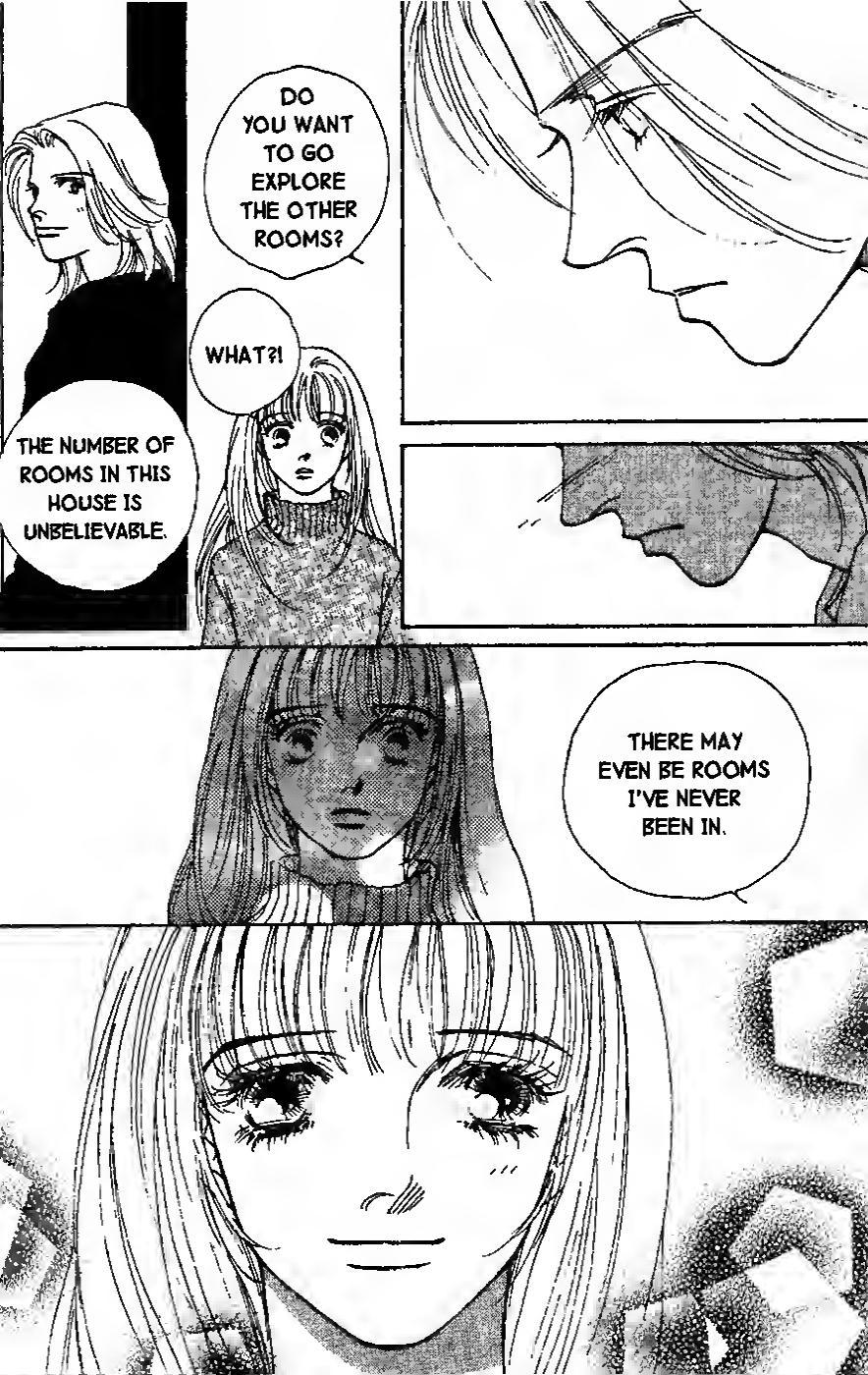
AKIHIKO KASHINO.
HE'S OUR REAL FATHER.

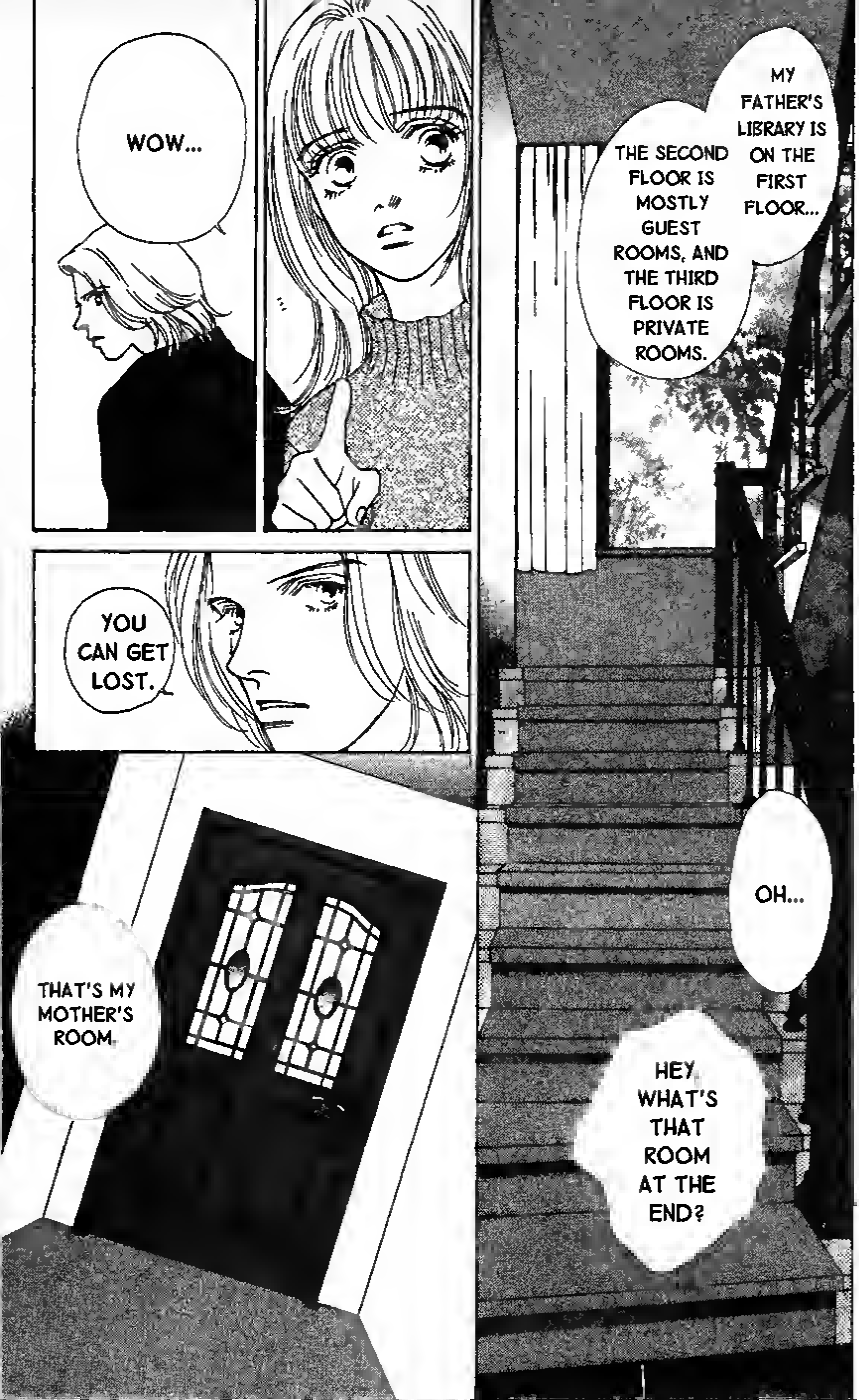
IS THIS.. THE PICTURE YOU SHOWED SEI?
YEAH...
YOU LOOK LIKE HIM...
CAN YOU SEE THE DNA?
YEAH... I GUESS HE'S REALLY YOUR FATHER.
HE DOES... THE SAME THING YOU DO.
YOUR LEFT EYEBROW GOES UP WHEN YOU SMILE.


REI...
YOU'RE BEGINNING TO LOOK LIKE YOUR FATHER.
WHEN YOU LAUGH, YOU LOOK EXACTLY LIKE HIM.

MY MOTHER MUST'VE SEEN THAT TOO.
SHE ALWAYS USED TO TELL ME...
THAT I LOOKED JUST LIKE MY FATHER.
TO THINK THAT SHE WAS REMEMBERING A DEAD MAN...
AND SEEING SOMETHING SO TRIVIAL...
YOUR MOTHER WAS IN LOVE.

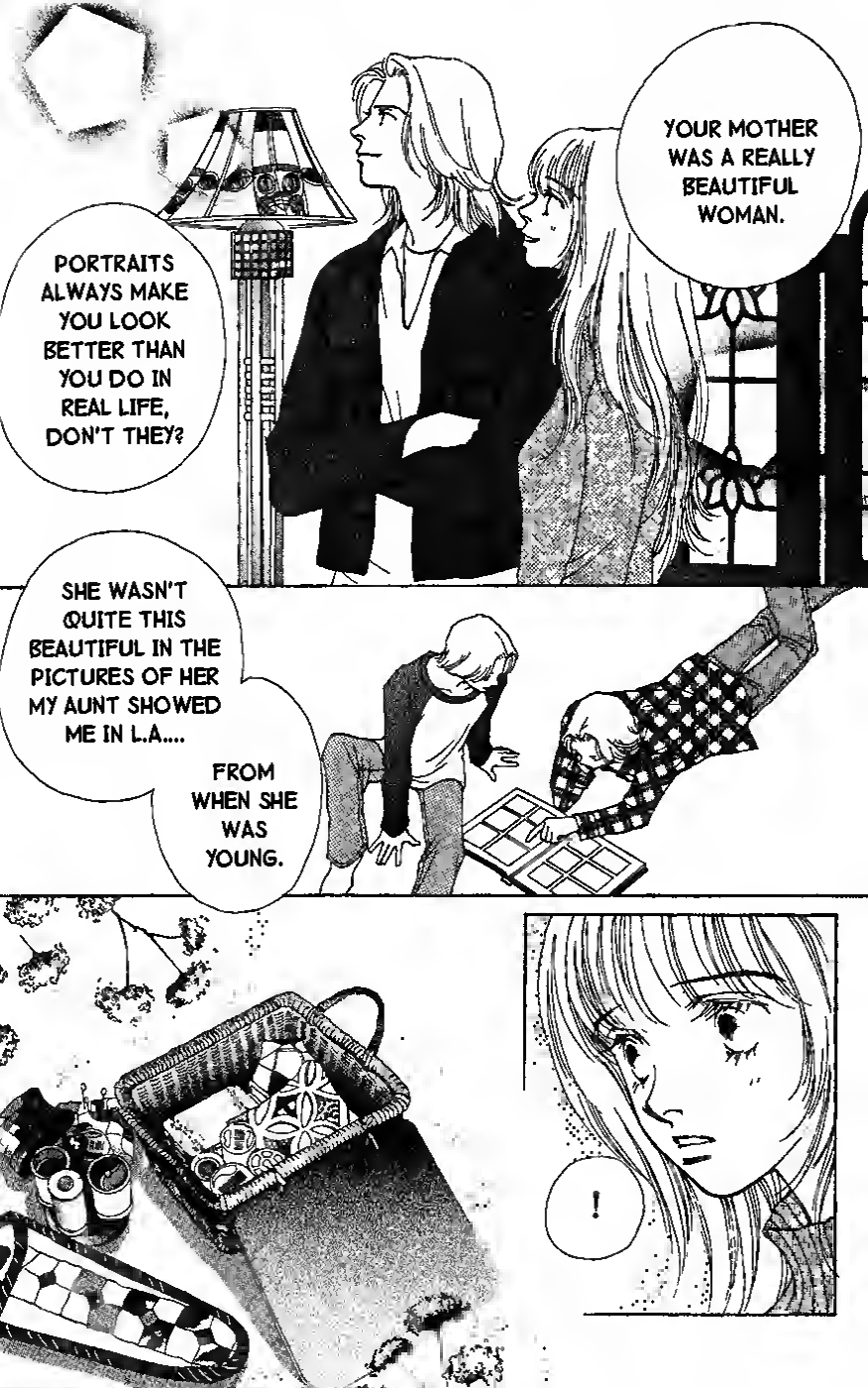
TO REMEMBER SOMETHING SO LITTLE SO VIVIDLY...
SHE WAS REALLY IN LOVE WITH THIS MAN.
NO MATTER WHAT THE CIRCUM-STANCES WERE...
THE LOVE BETWEEN YOUR MOTHER AND HIM WAS REAL.
THEY REALLY LOVED EACH OTHER, AND THAT'S WHY YOU AND SEI WERE BORN.

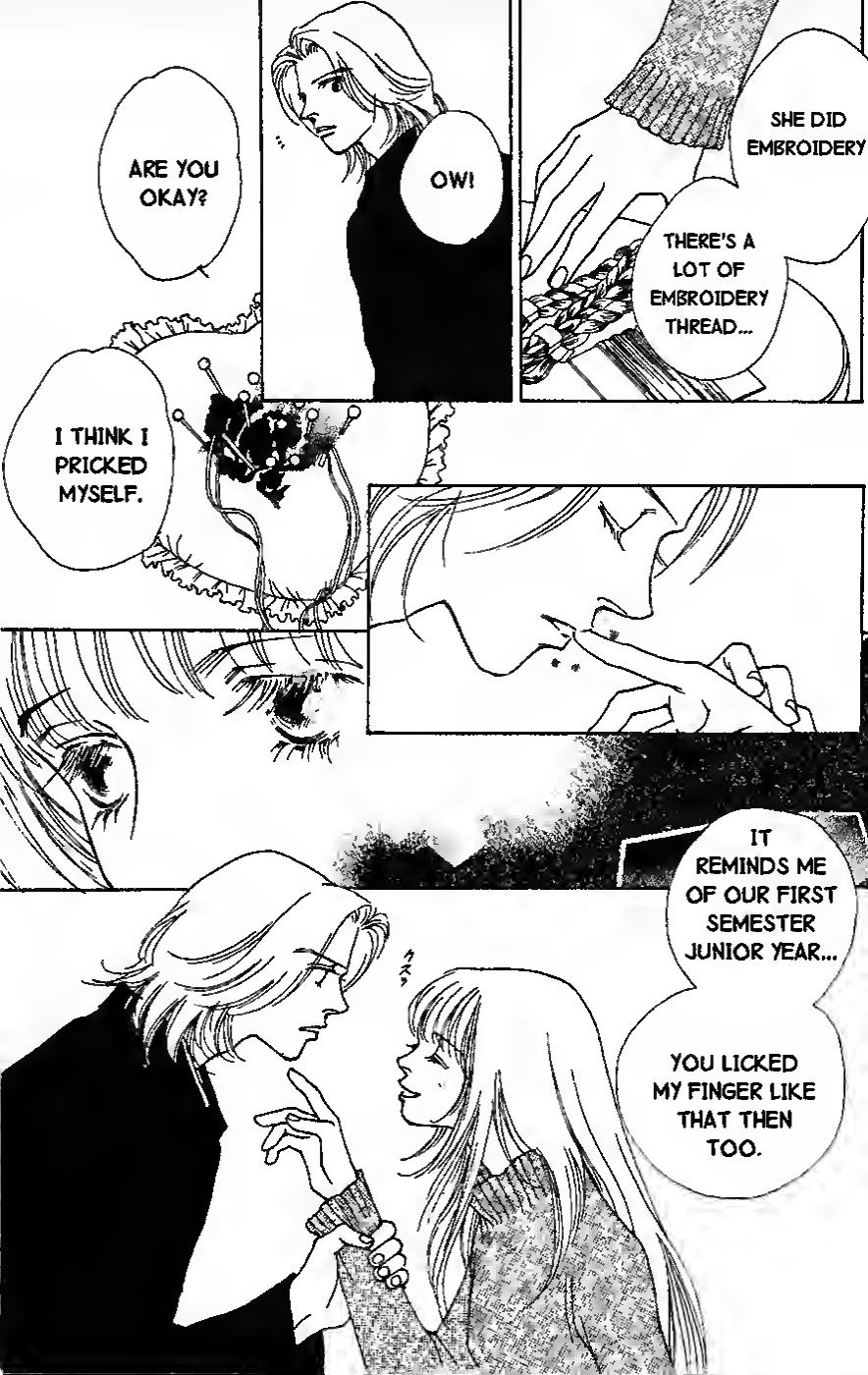

DO YOU WANT TO GO EXPLORE THE OTHER ROOMS?
WHAT?!
THE NUMBER OF ROOMS IN THIS HOUSE IS UNBELIEVABLE.
THERE MAY EVEN BE ROOMS I'VE NEVER BEEN IN.

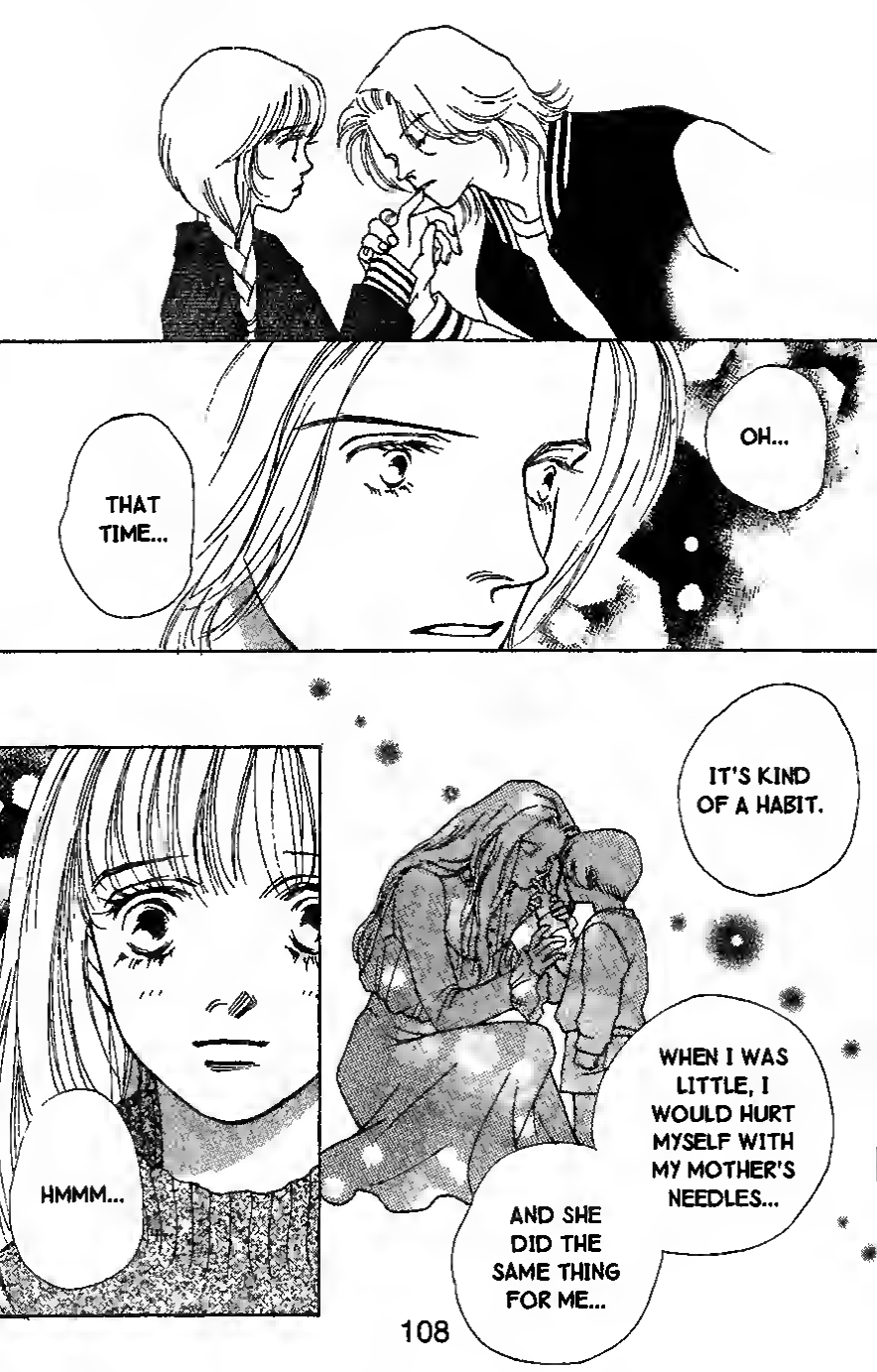

WOW...
YOU CAN GET LOST.
THAT'S MY MOTHER'S ROOM.
HEY, WHAT'S THAT ROOM AT THE END?
OH...
THE SECOND FLOOR IS MOSTLY GUEST ROOMS, AND THE THIRD FLOOR IS PRIVATE ROOMS.
MY FATHER'S LIBRARY IS ON THE FIRST FLOOR...

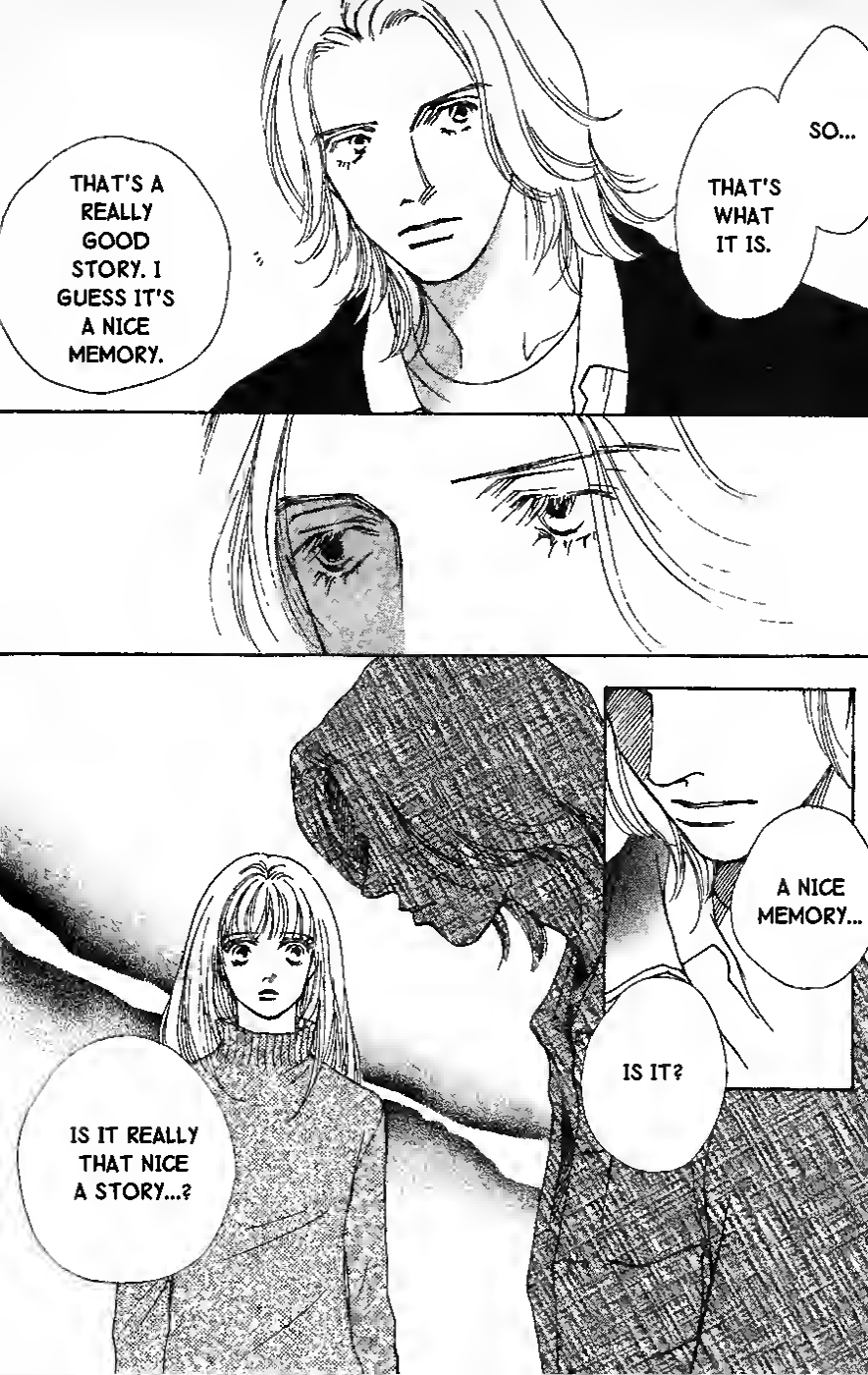
STOP IT, REI.
DAD'LL GET MAD IF HE FINDS OUT.
IT'S BEEN LOCKED EVER SINCE MY MOTHER DIED.
WHEN WE FIRST GOT BACK FROM L.A., WE USED TO TRY TO UNLOCK IT WITH A SAFETY PIN FOR FUN.
WHO CARES ABOUT DAD.
SEE, IT'S OPEN NOW.
ガチャ
?!
IT'S...
NOT LOCKED...

IS THIS POR-TRAIT...
...OF YOUR MOTHER?
YEAH.
IT WAS DONE BEFORE WE WERE BORN.
SHE'S BEAUTI-FUL...

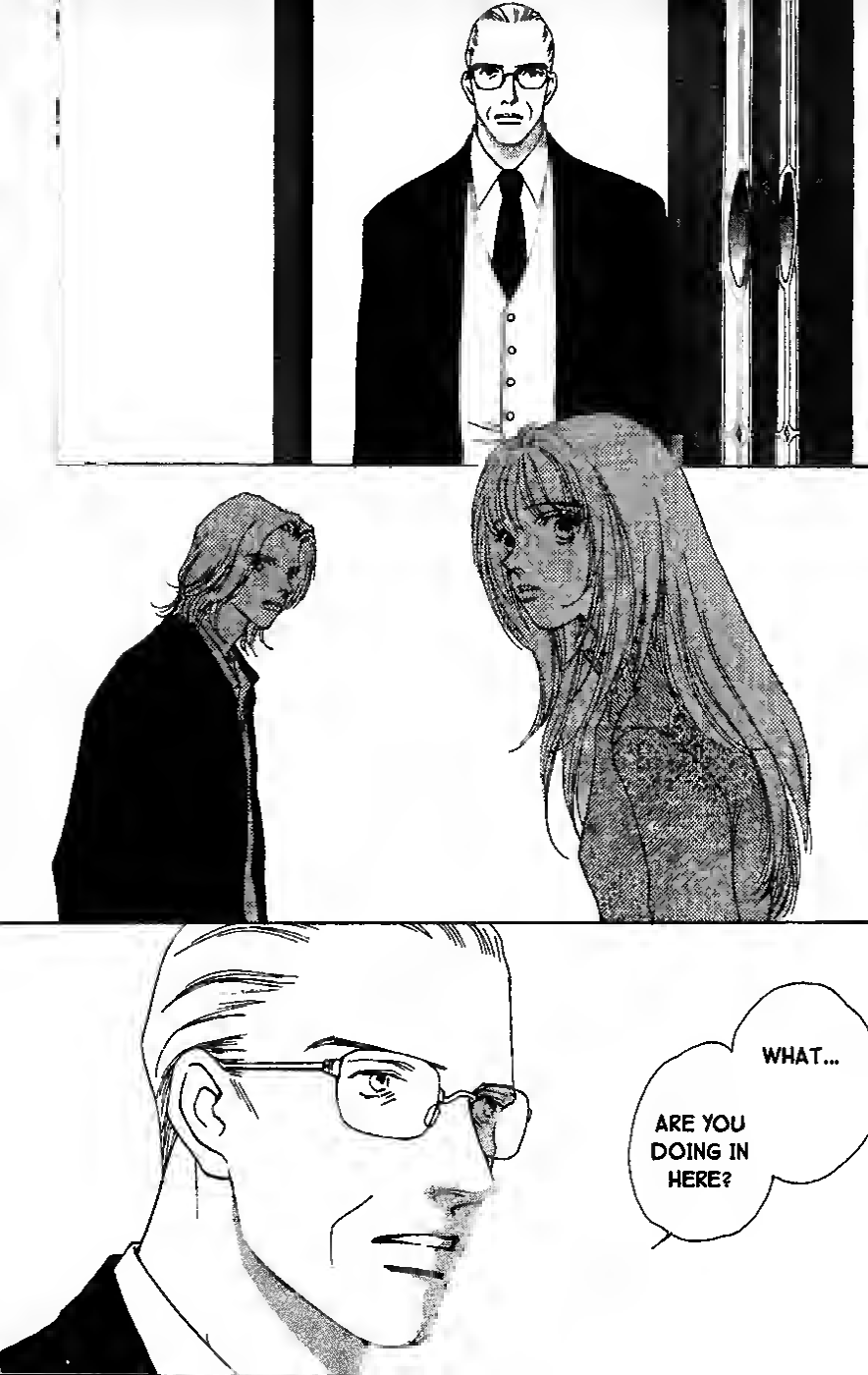

YOUR MOTHER WAS A REALLY BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.
PORTRAITS ALWAYS MAKE YOU LOOK BETTER THAN YOU DO IN REAL LIFE, DON'T THEY?
SHE WASN'T QUITE THIS BEAUTIFUL IN THE PICTURES OF HER MY AUNT SHOWED ME IN L.A....
FROM WHEN SHE WAS YOUNG.
!


ARE YOU OKAY?
OW!
SHE DID EMBROIDERY
THERE'S A LOT OF EMBROIDERY THREAD...
I THINK I PRICKED MYSELF.
IT REMINDS ME OF OUR FIRST SEMESTER JUNIOR YEAR...
YOU LICKED MY FINGER LIKE THAT THEN TOO.


THAT TIME...
OH...
IT'S KIND OF A HABIT.
WHEN I WAS LITTLE, I WOULD HURT MYSELF WITH MY MOTHER'S NEEDLES...
AND SHE DID THE SAME THING FOR ME...
HMMM...

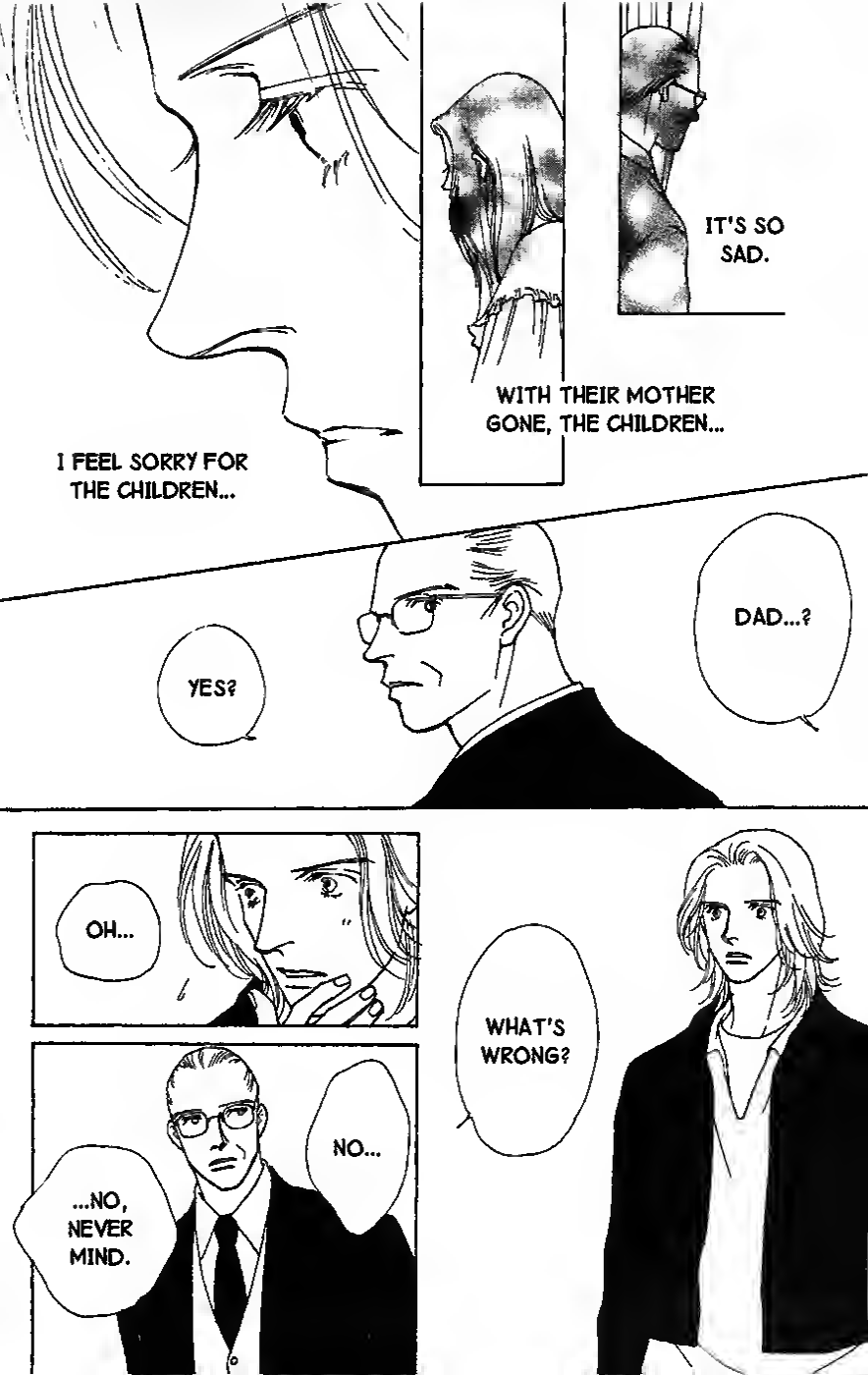

SO...
THAT'S WHAT IT IS.
THAT'S A REALLY GOOD STORY. I GUESS IT'S A NICE MEMORY.
A NICE MEMORY...
IS IT?
IS IT REALLY THAT NICE A STORY...?

WHAT'S WRONG?
YOU'RE ACTING STRANGE.
REI?
カチャ

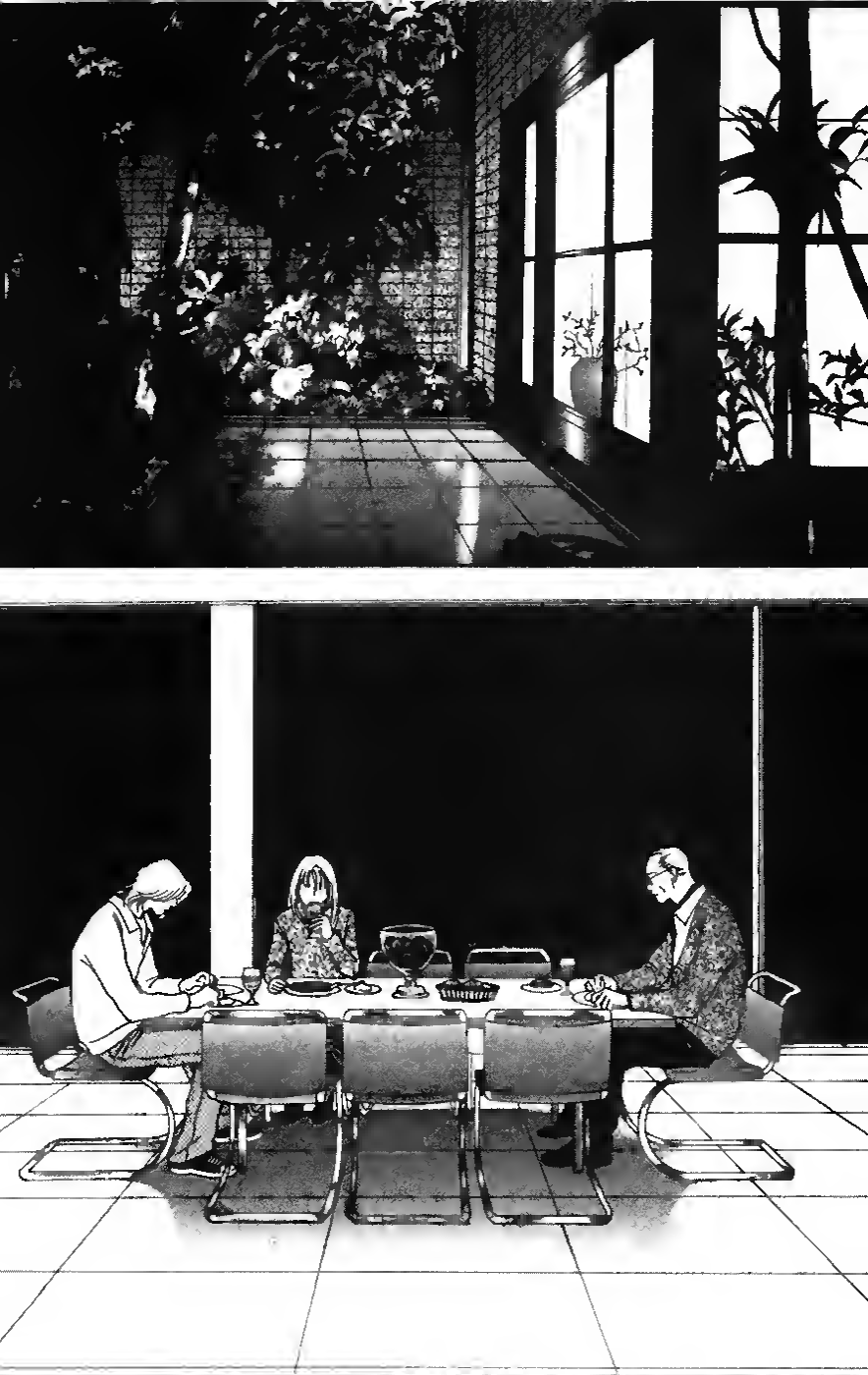

WHAT...
ARE YOU DOING IN HERE?

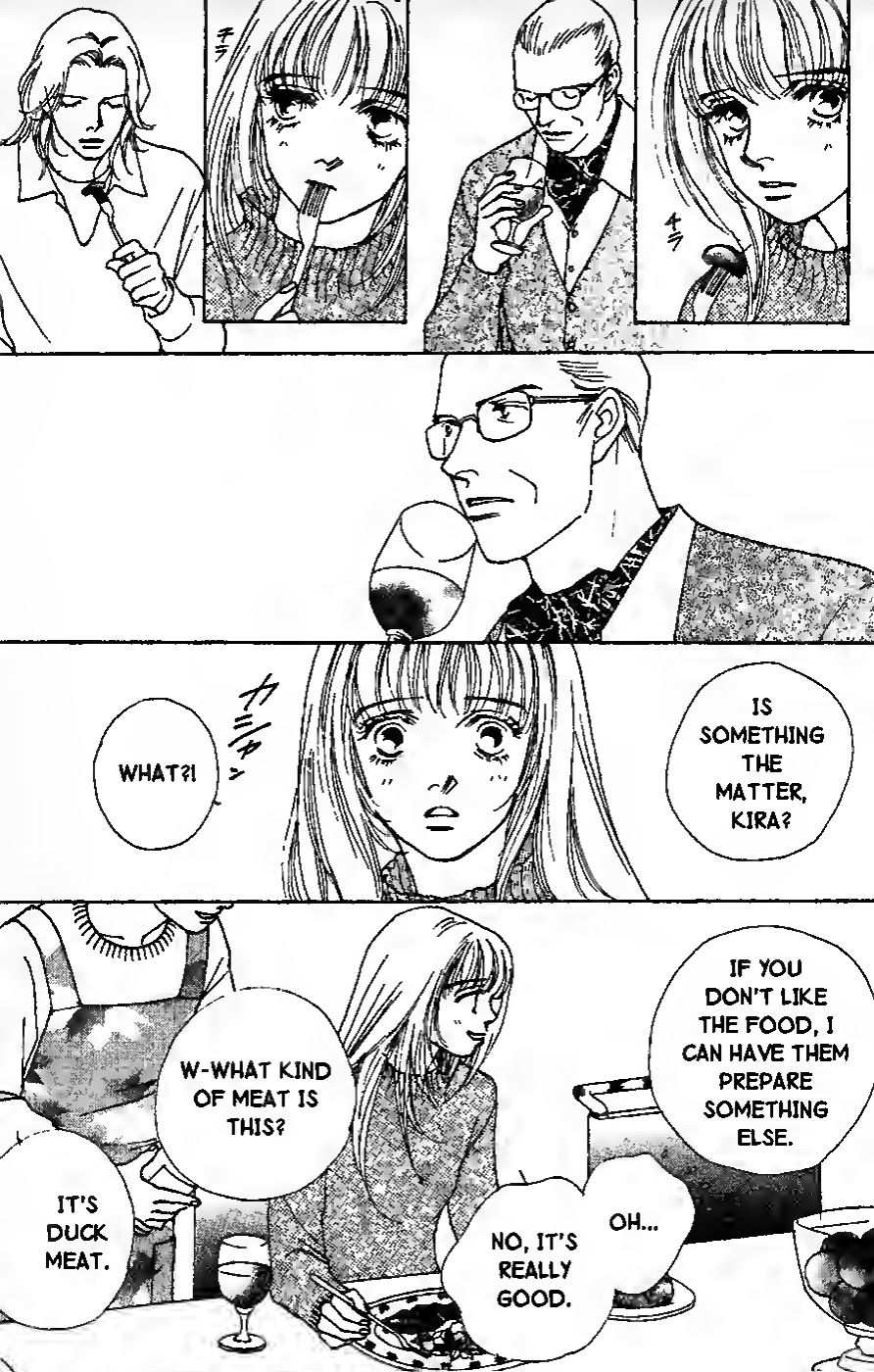
RIGHT...
OH...
SORRY.
THE DOOR WAS UNLOCKED, SO...
?!
IT'S YOUR MOTHER'S ROOM. YOU SHOULDN'T FEEL ANY HESITATION.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO APOLO-GIZE.

BUT IT WAS ALWAYS LOCKED BEFORE...
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU WERE YOUNG. I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO REMEMBER YOUR DEAD MOTHER..
SO I LEFT THIS ROOM LOCKED...
WE SHOULD AIR OUT THE ROOM. IT'S TOO SAD OTHERWISE.


I FEEL SORRY FOR THE CHILDREN...
WITH THEIR MOTHER GONE, THE CHILDREN...
IT'S SO SAD.
YES?
DAD...?
OH...
...NO, NEVER MIND.
NO...
WHAT'S WRONG?

EXCUSE ME, SIR.
DINNER IS READY. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO?
WE'LL BE RIGHT THERE.
I'M HUNGRY.
LET'S EAT.
.....



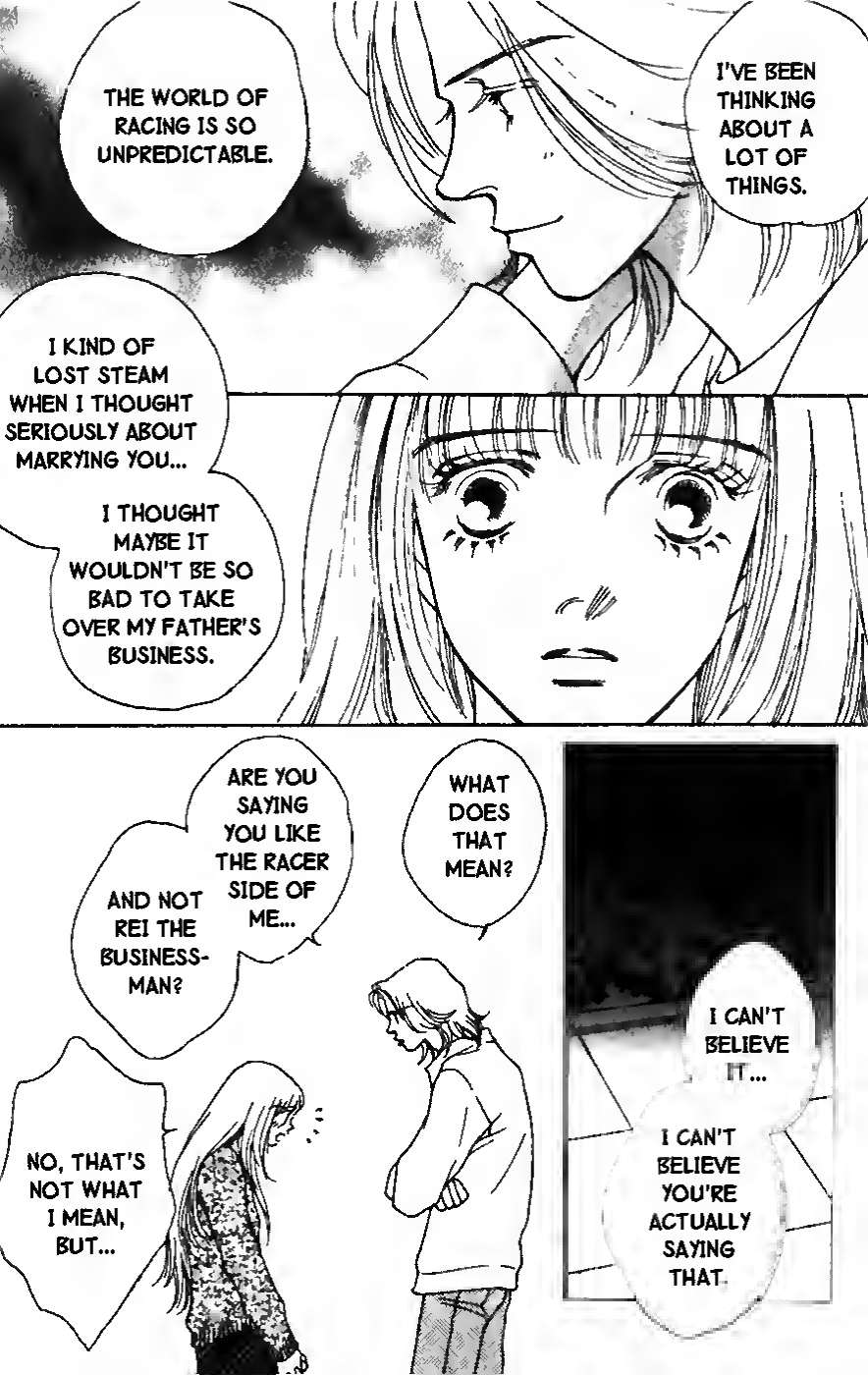

チラ
チラ
IS SOMETHING THE MATTER, KIRA?
カミナリ
WHAT?!
IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE FOOD, I CAN HAVE THEM PREPARE SOMETHING ELSE.
W-WHAT KIND OF MEAT IS THIS?
OH...
NO, IT'S REALLY GOOD.
IT'S DUCK MEAT.

DUCK WAS YOUR FAVORITE, RIGHT?
かも…
NO, IT WAS SEI'S FAVORITE.
SEI?
WAS IT REALLY...
IT REALLY DOESN'T MATTER.
WE LOOK THE SAME ANYWAY.
LIKE FRIED HORSE MACKEREL OR MISO-STEWED MACKEREL...
HE LIKES JAPANESE FOOD.
EVEN THOUGH HE'S NOT VERY GOOD AT USING CHOPSTICKS.
UH, UM...
REI LIKES FISH!

あっ
I'M SORRY I SUCK AT USING CHOPSTICKS.
I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T MEAN THAT.
FORGET IT.
IT'S BEEN AWHILE SINCE DINNER-TIME WAS SO LIVELY...
WHY DON'T YOU AND KIRA JUST MOVE IN HERE?
YOUR APARTMENT BUILDING IS BEING DEMOLISHED ANYWAY, RIGHT?
YOU AND KIRA STILL HAVE SCHOOL. YOU SHOULDN'T BE WORRIED ABOUT WORKING.

REI HAS DECIDED TO LEARN BUSINESS FROM ME.
SCHOOL...
I WAS SO RELIEVED WHEN HE SAID HE WOULD QUIT RIDING MOTORCYCLES

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
YOU QUIT RIDING...
THERE'S NO MEANING. IT'S JUST LIKE HE SAID.
IS IT BECAUSE OF ME?
ARE YOU ONLY DOING WHAT HE SAYS BECAUSE YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT ME?
NO, I CAME UP WITH IT MYSELF.


THE WORLD OF RACING IS SO UNPREDICTABLE.
I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT A LOT OF THINGS.
I KIND OF LOST STEAM WHEN I THOUGHT SERIOUSLY ABOUT MARRYING YOU...
I THOUGHT MAYBE IT WOULDN'T BE SO BAD TO TAKE OVER MY FATHER'S BUSINESS.
ARE YOU SAYING YOU LIKE THE RACER SIDE OF ME...
AND NOT REI THE BUSINESS-MAN?
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN, BUT...
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE ACTUALLY SAYING THAT.

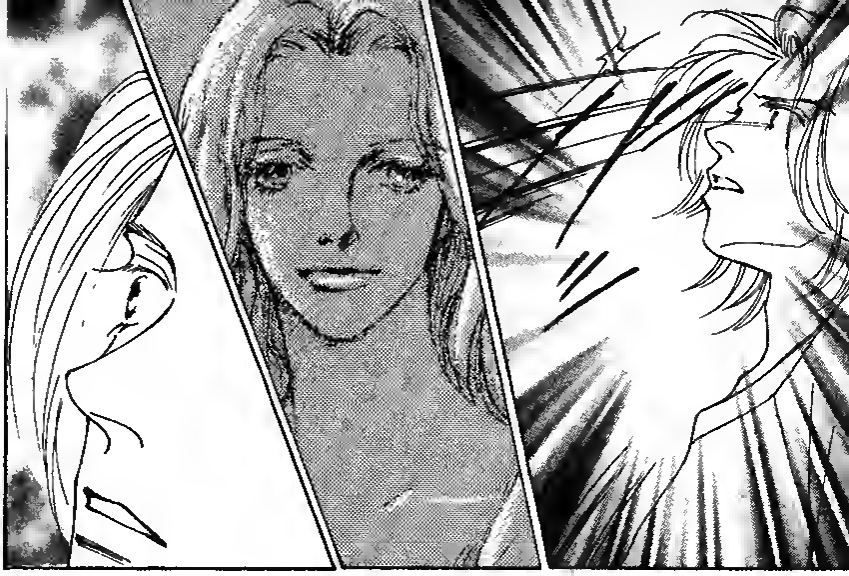
SO IT'S GOOD.
OF COURSE...
I'LL HAVE MORE PEACE OF MIND IF YOU'RE A BUSINESSMAN INSTEAD OF A RACER, BUT...
THERE'S SO MUCH STUFF THAT HAPPENED TODAY, I'M EXHAUSTED...
LET'S TAKE A SHOWER AND GO TO BED.
.....

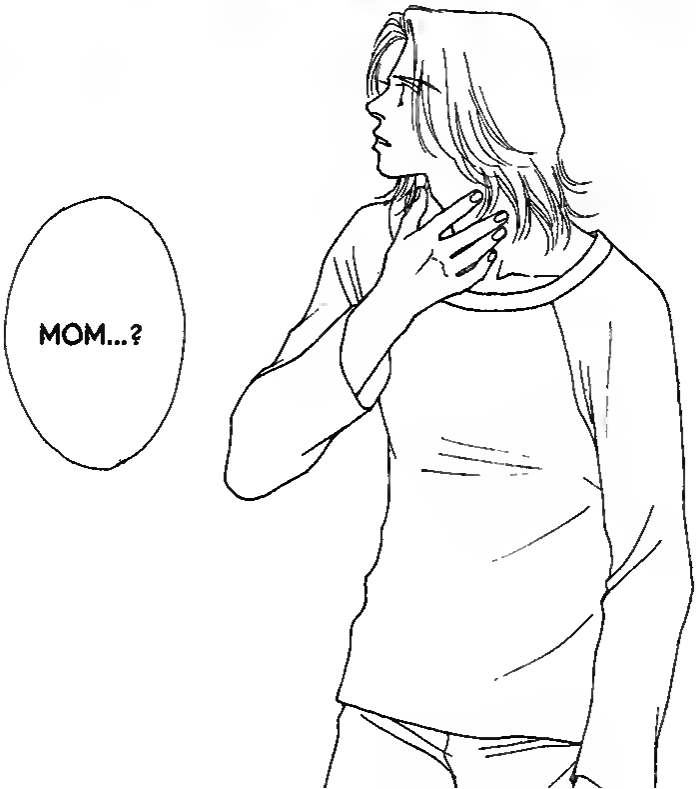
カチャ…
WHAT, YOU'RE NOT ASLEEP YET?
IT'S JUST...
THE ROOM'S TOO BIG AND I CAN'T GET COMFORTABLE.

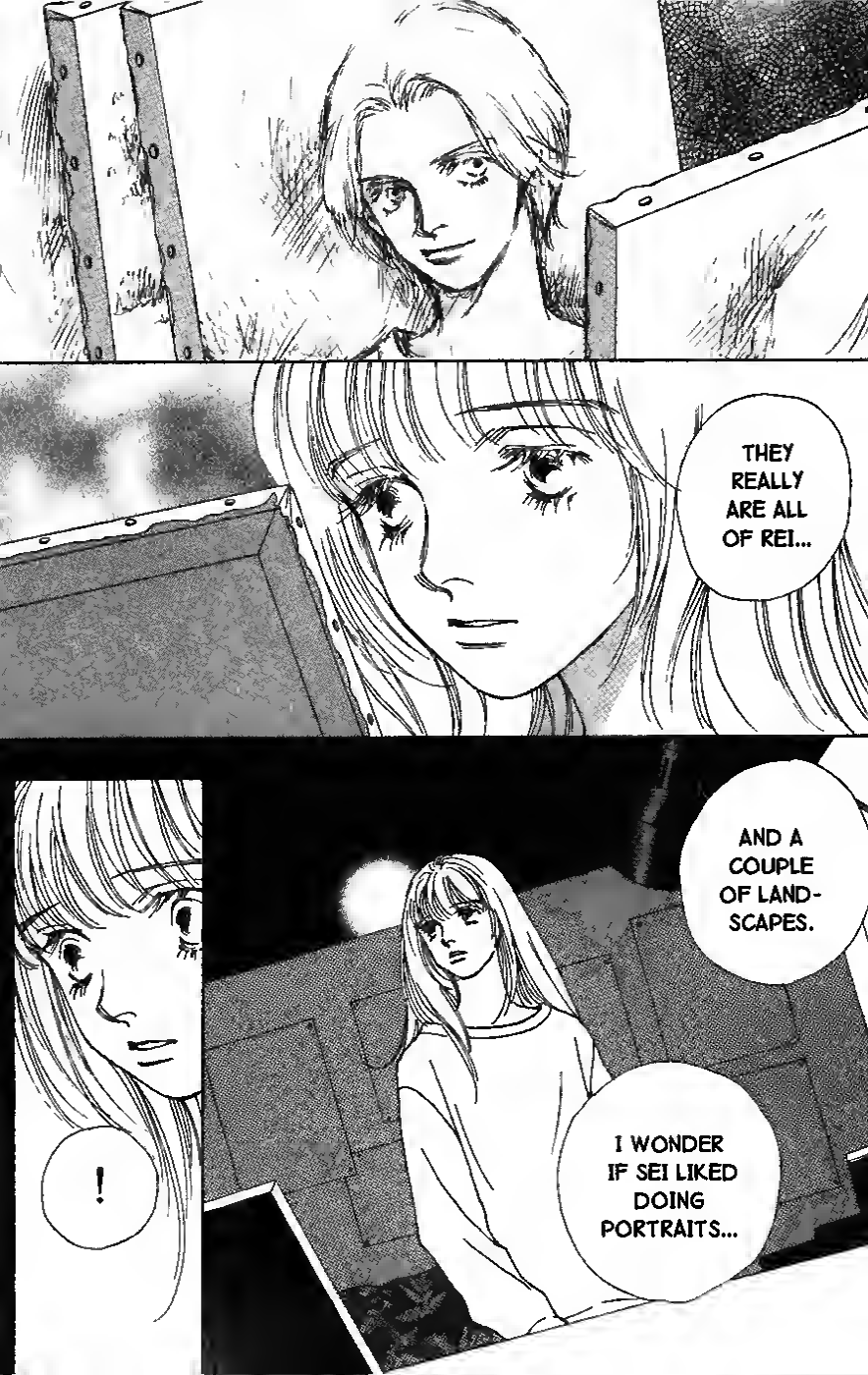
YEAH...
WELL, IT IS REALLY BIG.
HEY, CAN I CHECK OUT SEI'S ROOM AGAIN?
THAT ROOM RELAXES ME...
I THINK IT'S THE SMELL OF OIL PAINT.

PEOPLE SAY A PAINTING REVEALS A PERSON'S SOUL.
YEAH, GO AHEAD.
THAT'S WHAT MY SHRINK TOLD ME.
KIRA...
110日ー

THEY WERE REALLY IN LOVE, HUH?




MOM...?


THEY REALLY ARE ALL OF REI...
AND A COUPLE OF LAND-SCAPES.
I WONDER IF SEI LIKED DOING PORTRAITS...
!

JUST ONE ABSTRACT PAINTING?!
PEOPLE SAY A PAINTING REVEALS A PERSON'S SOUL.
...SHOWS THEIR SOUL...
THIS ONE...
LOOKS LIKE IT WAS SMEARED WITH PAINT...

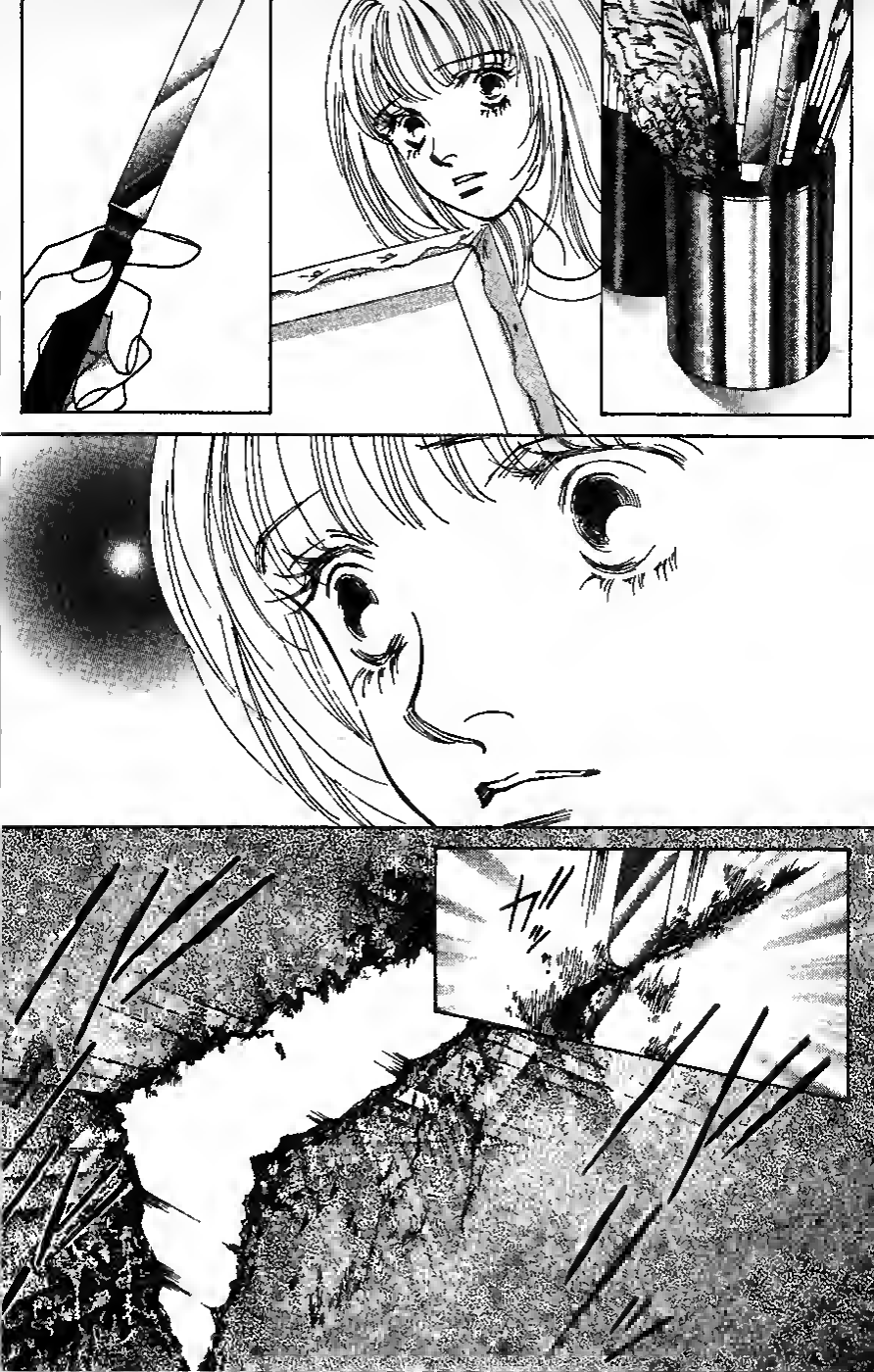
WHAT IS THIS?
THERE'S SOMETHING STICKING OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PAINTING...
IT LOOKS LIKE A SQUARE PIECE OF PAPER WAS PAINTED OVER.
.....WHAT?!

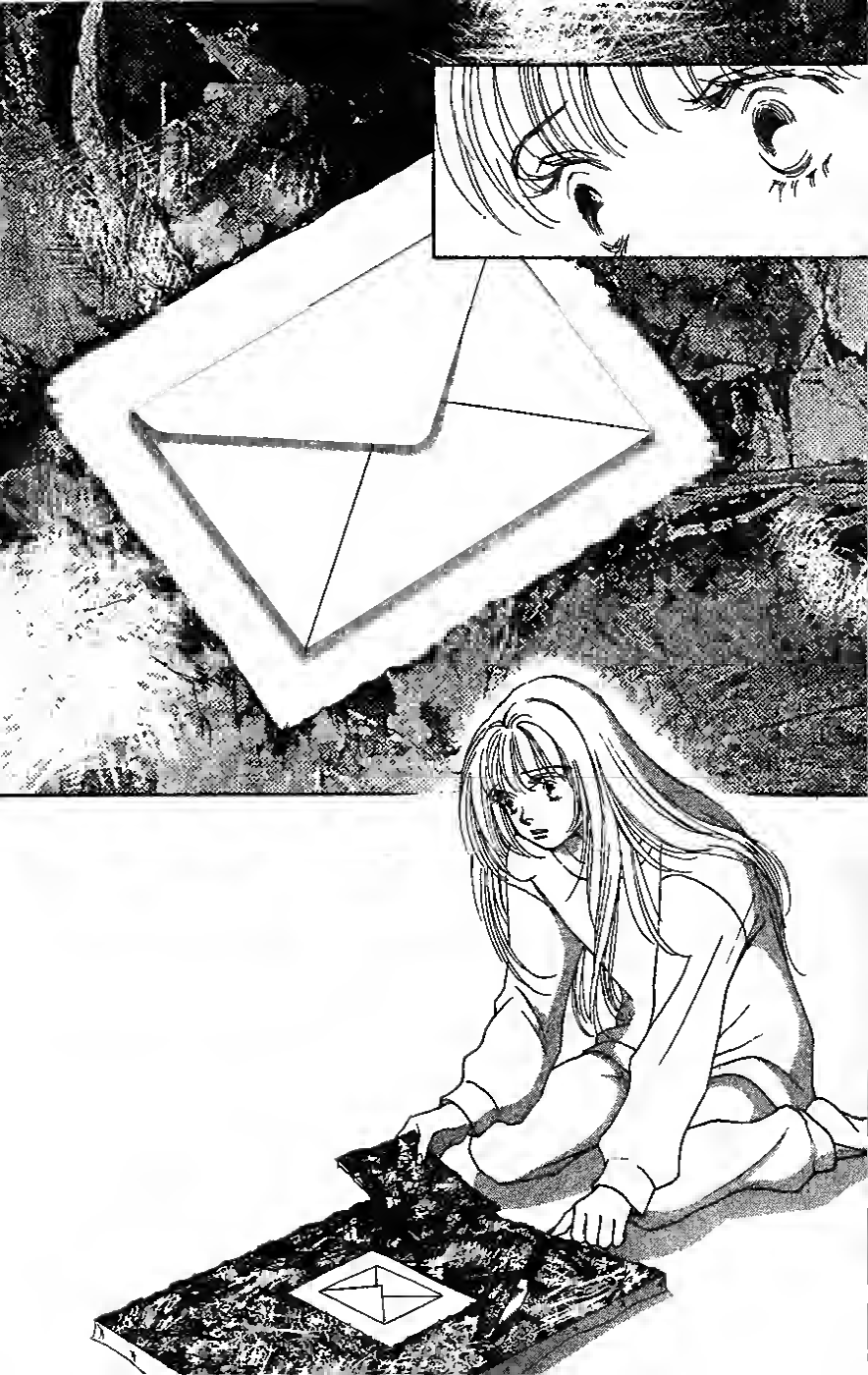
A SQUARE PIECE OF PAPER...

A SUICIDE NOTE?!

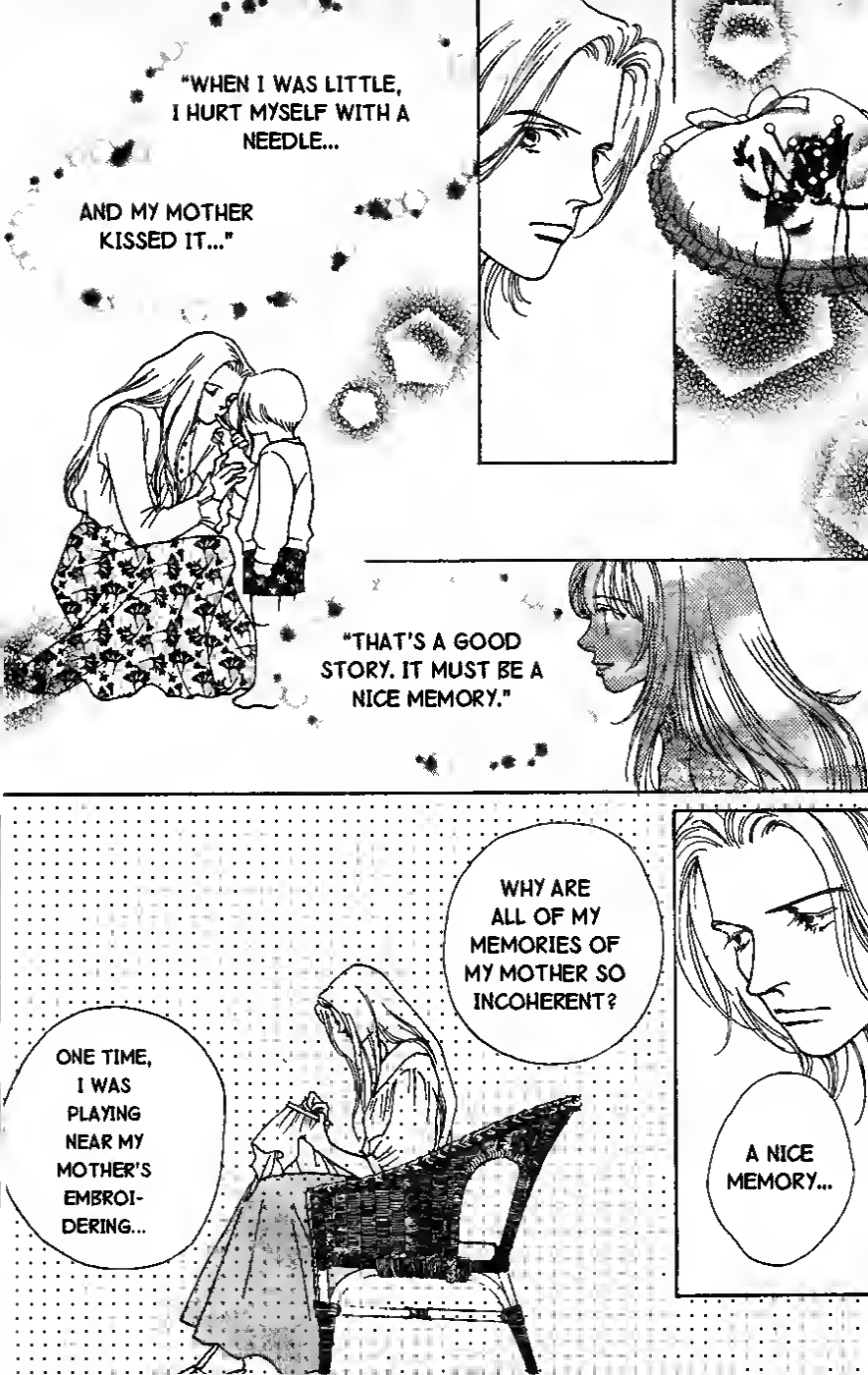
COULD IT BE THAT HE LEFT A SUICIDE NOTE IN HERE...?!

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE... BUT...
BUT IF IT REALLY IS...

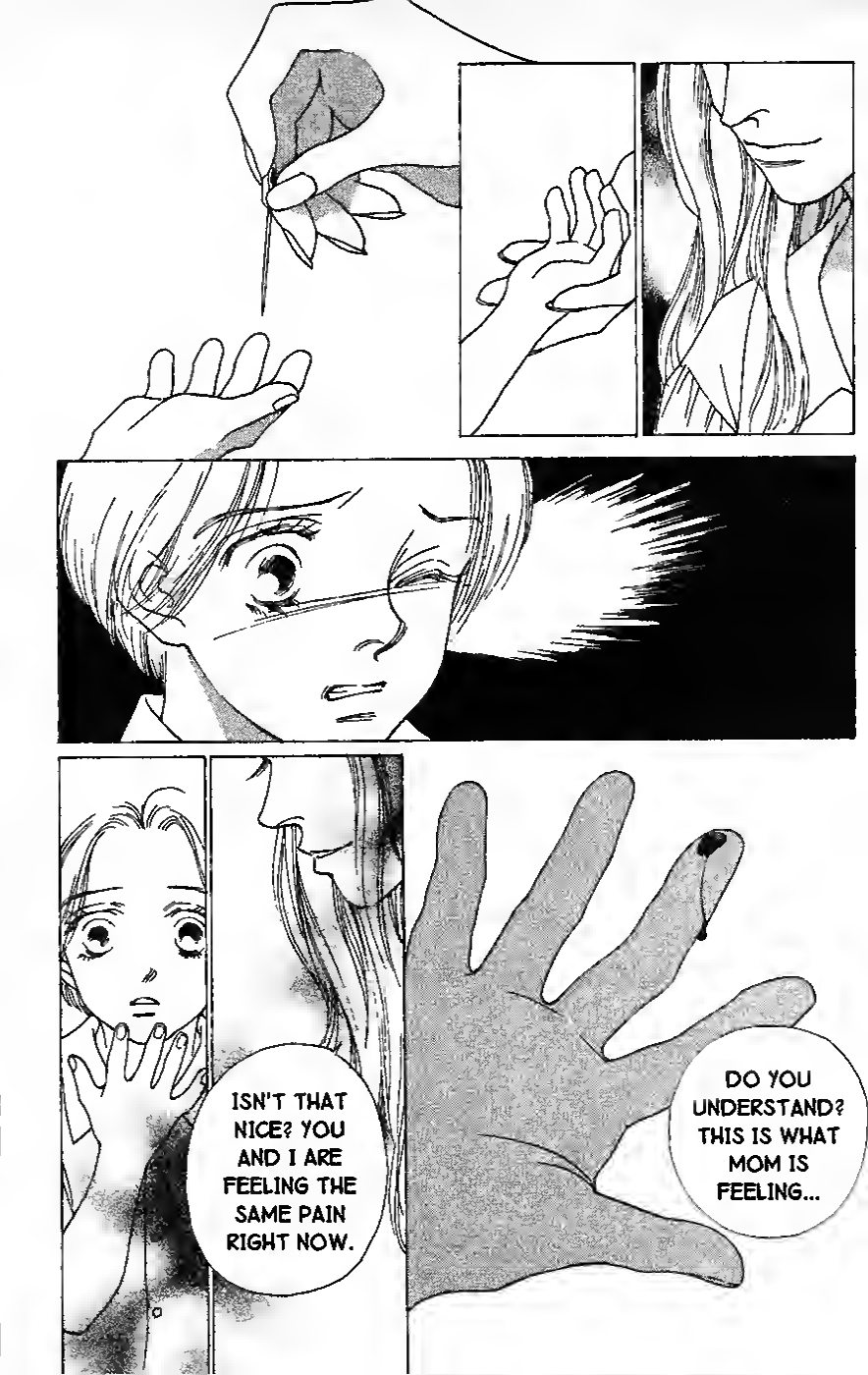




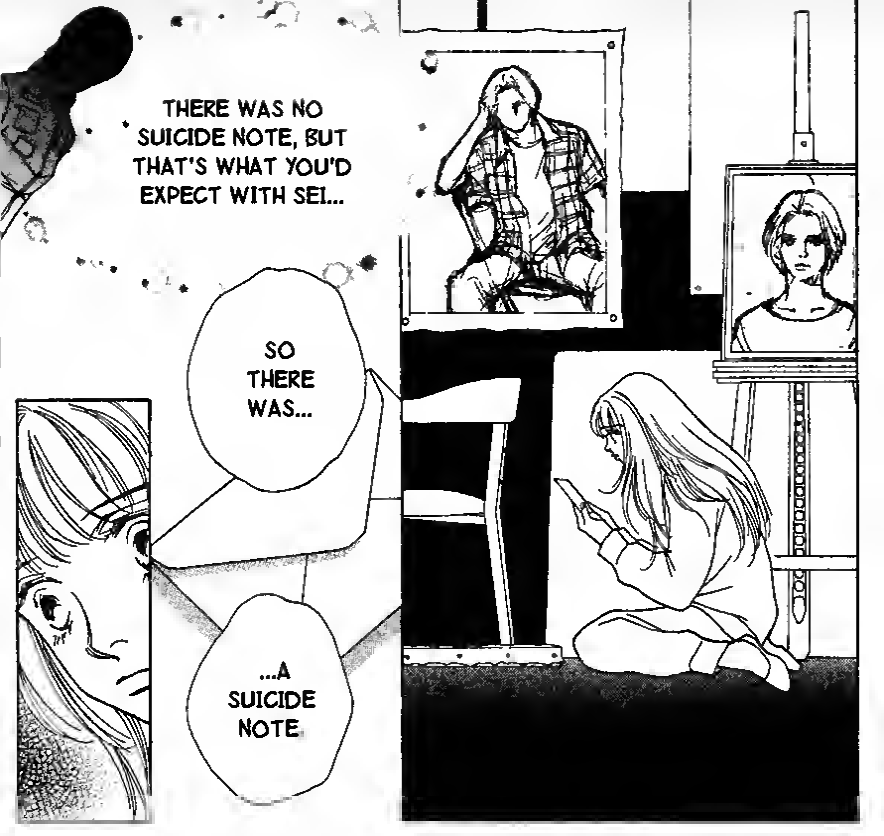
WHY DID I THINK...
THAT MY MOTHER WOULD TRY TO KILL ME?
WHY WOULD SHE TRY TO STRANGLE ME...?
SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO LOVE ME...

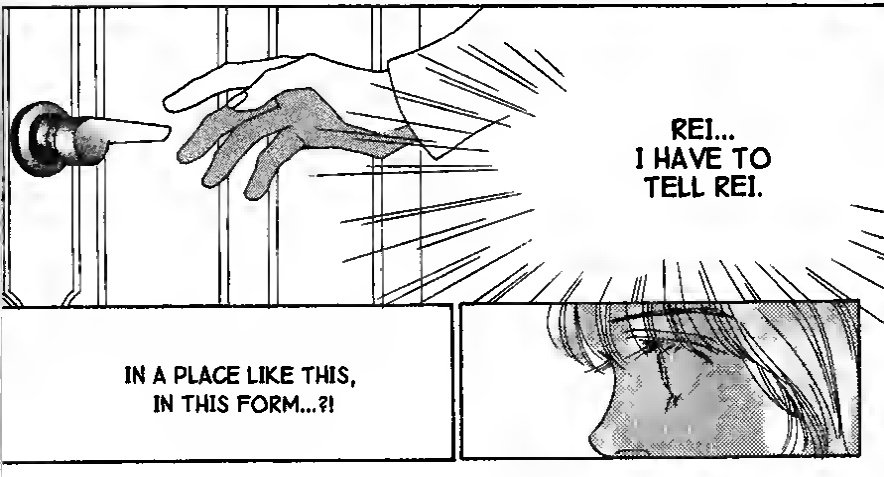

"WHEN I WAS LITTLE, I HURT MYSELF WITH A NEEDLE...
AND MY MOTHER KISSED IT..."
"THAT'S A GOOD STORY. IT MUST BE A NICE MEMORY."
WHY ARE ALL OF MY MEMORIES OF MY MOTHER SO INCOHERENT?
A NICE MEMORY...
ONE TIME, I WAS PLAYING NEAR MY MOTHER'S EMBROI-DERING...

OW!
WHAT'S WRONG, MOM?
YOU'RE BLEED-ING!
I JUST PRICKED MYSELF.
DOES IT HURT?
DOES IT HURT A LOT?


DO YOU UNDERSTAND? THIS IS WHAT MOM IS FEELING...
ISN'T THAT NICE? YOU AND I ARE FEELING THE SAME PAIN RIGHT NOW.

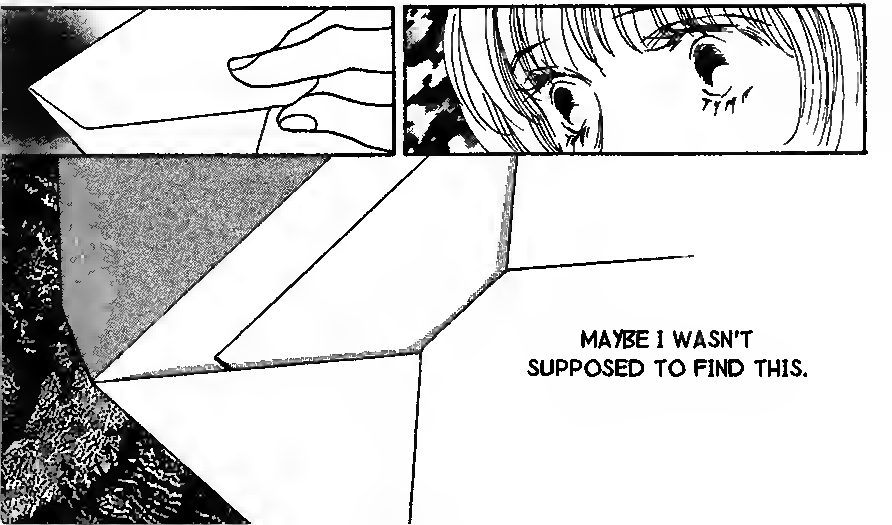
YOU AND MOMMY ARE ALWAYS TOGETHER...
IF YOU DIE, MOMMY'S GOING TO DIE TOO.


THERE WAS NO SUICIDE NOTE, BUT THAT'S WHAT YOU'D EXPECT WITH SEI...
SO THERE WAS...
...A SUICIDE NOTE


REI... I HAVE TO TELL REI.
IN A PLACE LIKE THIS, IN THIS FORM...?!

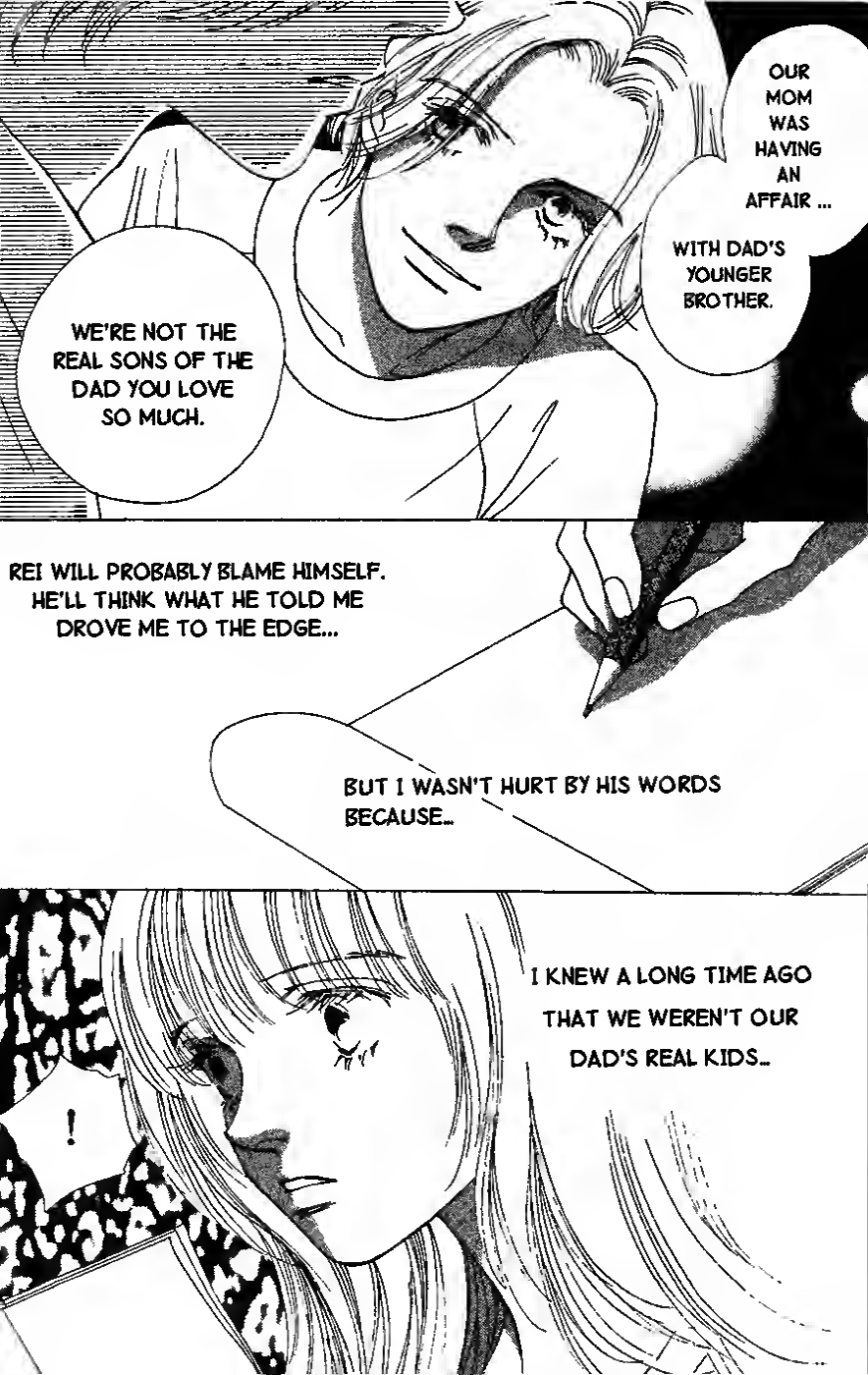
IF HE REALLY WANTED SOMEONE TO READ IT, HE WOULD'VE PUT IT SOMEPLACE EASIER TO FIND...
WHY DID HE PUT IT IN SUCH A SECRET PLACE?
IT MUST BE...
WAIT...
WHY PUT A SUICIDE NOTE HERE...?!
COULD IT BE...
...BECAUSE HE DIDN'T WANT ANYONE TO READ IT..?!

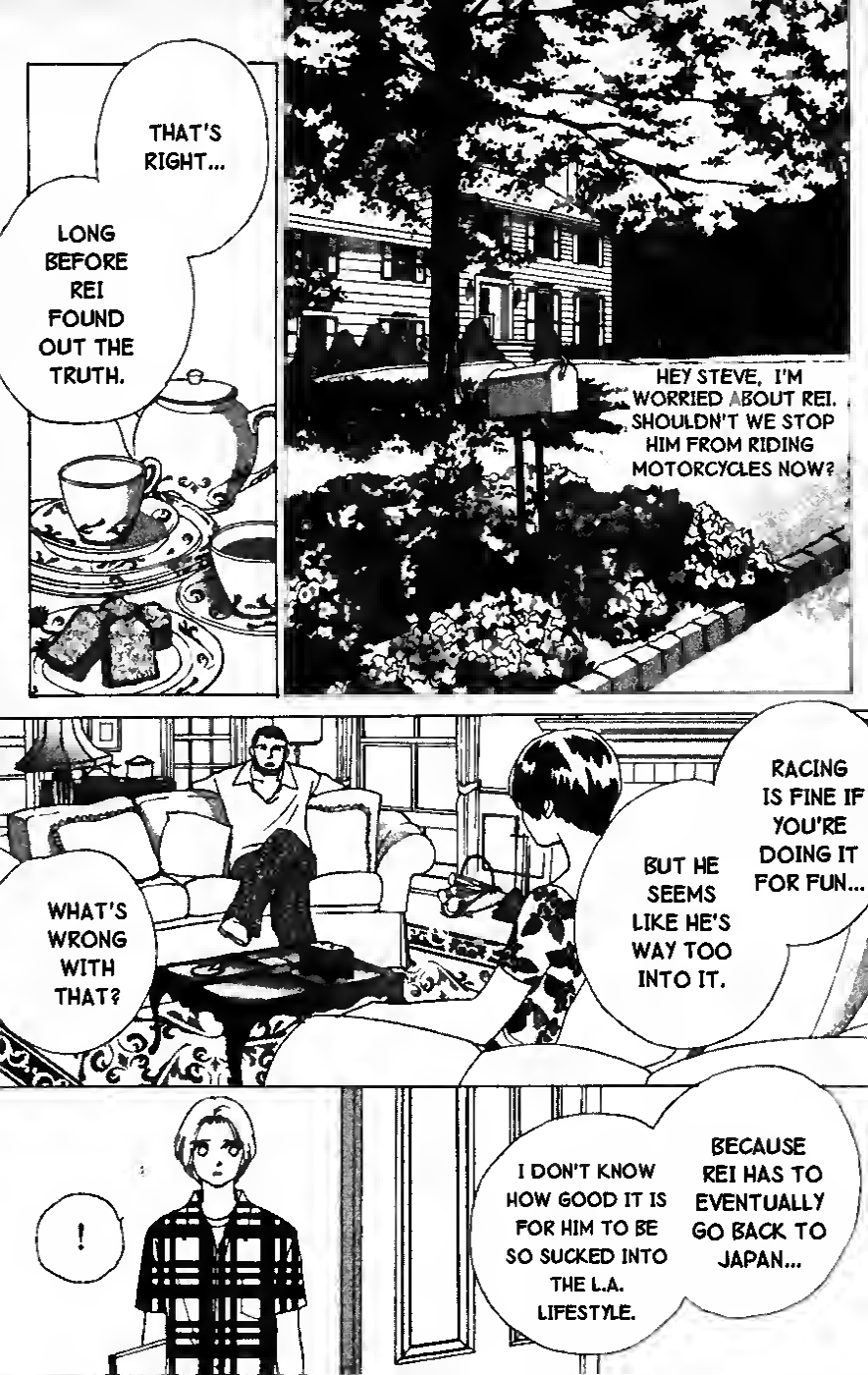
SEI'S TRUE FEELINGS ARE WRITTEN ON THIS PIECE OF PAPER.



BUT...
...SEI COULDN'T HELP BUT WRITE DOWN HOW HE FELT. THIS IS THE REAL SEI.
NOVEMBER 29TH...I'M GOING TO DIE TODAY.

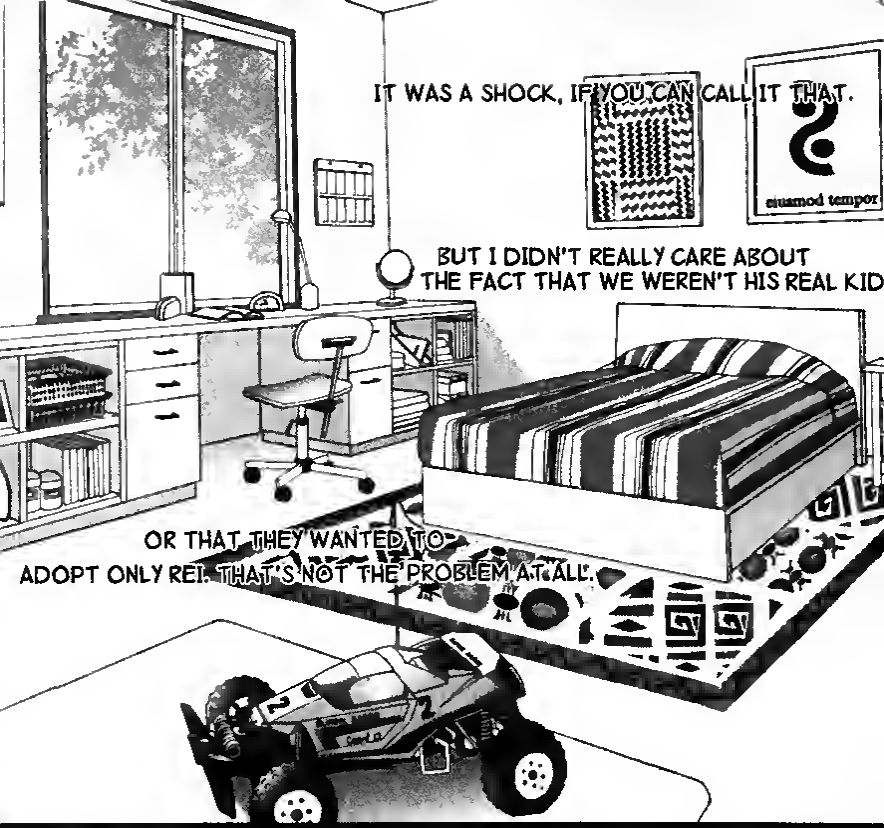
EVERYONE WILL PROBABLY HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT MY DEATH...EXCEPT FOR ONE PERSON.
LOOK AT THIS PHOTO.
DOESN'T HE LOOK LIKE US?
GUESS WHERE I FOUND IT?

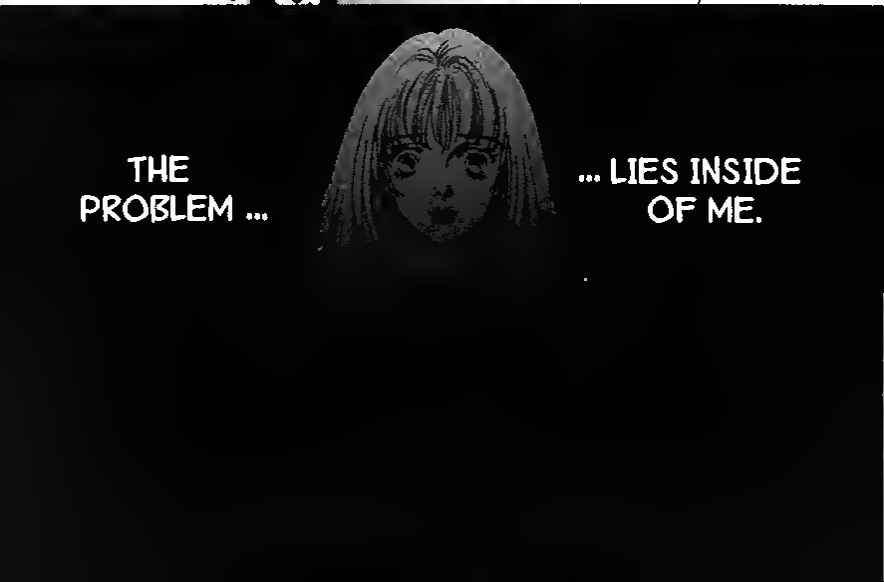

OUR MOM WAS HAVING AN AFFAIR ...
WITH DAD'S YOUNGER BROTHER.
WE'RE NOT THE REAL SONS OF THE DAD YOU LOVE SO MUCH.
REI WILL PROBABLY BLAME HIMSELF. HE'LL THINK WHAT HE TOLD ME DROVE ME TO THE EDGE...
BUT I WASN'T HURT BY HIS WORDS BECAUSE...
I KNEW A LONG TIME AGO THAT WE WEREN'T OUR DAD'S REAL KIDS...
!


THAT'S RIGHT...
LONG BEFORE REI FOUND OUT THE TRUTH.
HEY STEVE, I'M WORRIED ABOUT REI. SHOULDN'T WE STOP HIM FROM RIDING MOTORCYCLES NOW?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?
BUT HE SEEMS LIKE HE'S WAY TOO INTO IT.
RACING IS FINE IF YOU'RE DOING IT FOR FUN...
!
I DON'T KNOW HOW GOOD IT IS FOR HIM TO BE SO SUCKED INTO THE L.A. LIFESTYLE.
BECAUSE REI HAS TO EVENTUALLY GO BACK TO JAPAN...

THAT'S SOMETHING FOR MY BROTHER, THEIR FATHER, TO DECIDE, NOT US.
THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE SHOULD MAKE HIM STOP RIDING.
THAT KID HAS AMAZING TALENT AS A RACER.
HEY, WHAT IF WE ADOPT REI AS OUR OWN?
.....
REMEMBER, REI'S RELATED TO YOU, SO THROUGH THICK AND THIN...
BESIDES, WE DON'T HAVE ANY KIDS.
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
YEAH, I'M SERIOUS.

REI AND SEI ARE TWINS.
KASHINO SHOULDN'T HAVE A PROBLEM WITH US ADOPTING ONE OF THEM.
AND THOSE TWO AREN'T EVEN HIS REAL KIDS...


IT WAS A SHOCK, IF YOU CAN CALL IT THAT.
eiusmod tempor
BUT I DIDN'T REALLY CARE ABOUT THE FACT THAT WE WEREN'T HIS REAL KID
OR THAT THEY WANTED TO ADOPT ONLY REI. THAT'S NOT THE PROBLEM AT ALL.


THE PROBLEM ...
... LIES INSIDE OF ME.

INSIDE OF ME LIVES A MONSTER WITHOUT A BODY.
NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY TO CALM IT, THE MONSTER STARTS ACTING UP INSIDE OF ME.
WAIT UP, SEI!!
HOW DARE YOU SNITCH ON ME TO REI.
I GOT MY BUTT KICKED BECAUSE OF YOU!

DON'T YOU DARE DO ANYTHING LIKE THAT AGAIN!
YOU JAP!!
HELP...
HELP ME

DIE, YOU WHITE PIG.

カチカチカチカチ
……
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IT WAS PROBABLY AT THAT MOMENT THAT I FIRST DISCOVERED MY BRUTAL SIDE. I WAS REALLY EXCITED. IT FELT LIKE I WAS SEEING SOMETHING AMAZING WHEN REI BLASTED THAT KID'S SKULL...

PEOPLE TALK ABOUT THE SACREDNESS OF HUMAN LIFE, BUT TO ME, HUMANS ARE JUST MOVING PILES OF MEAT.

THERE'S NOTHING BEAUTIFUL ABOUT THEM.

REI IS THE ONLY OTHER PERSON BESIDES MYSEL THAT I CAN FORGIVE.

SEI, HURRY, IT'S REI...
REI'S BRUTAL NATURE ALLOWS ME TO BE UNBELIEVABLY KIND. THE MORE AGGRESSIVE REI BECOMES, THE MORE PEACEFUL I CAN BE.
ALL I HAD TO DO WAS CRY. THE WEAKER I WAS, THE MORE REI LOST CONTROL. THE SAME WAY I BECAME DESTRUCTIVE THROUGH REI...
REI BECAME PROTECTIVE THROUGH ME.
REI.
STOP IT, STOP IT.

BUT...WE WERE CONCEIVED OUT OF OUR MOTHER'S INFIDELITY.
IT WAS THE FIRST TIME REI SHOWED ANY ILL WILL TOWARD ME...
REI IS GETTING FURTHER AWAY FROM ME, EVEN THOUGH WE'VE BEEN INSEPARABLE SINCE THE DAY WE WERE BORN. I WAS ABLE TO BE SANE WHEN REI WAS AROUND, I WAS ABLE TO BE A GOOD BOY...
I'M SCARED OF MYSELF. I'M NOT STRONG LIKE REI.
I DON'T HAVE THE COURAGE TO FACE THE REAL ME.

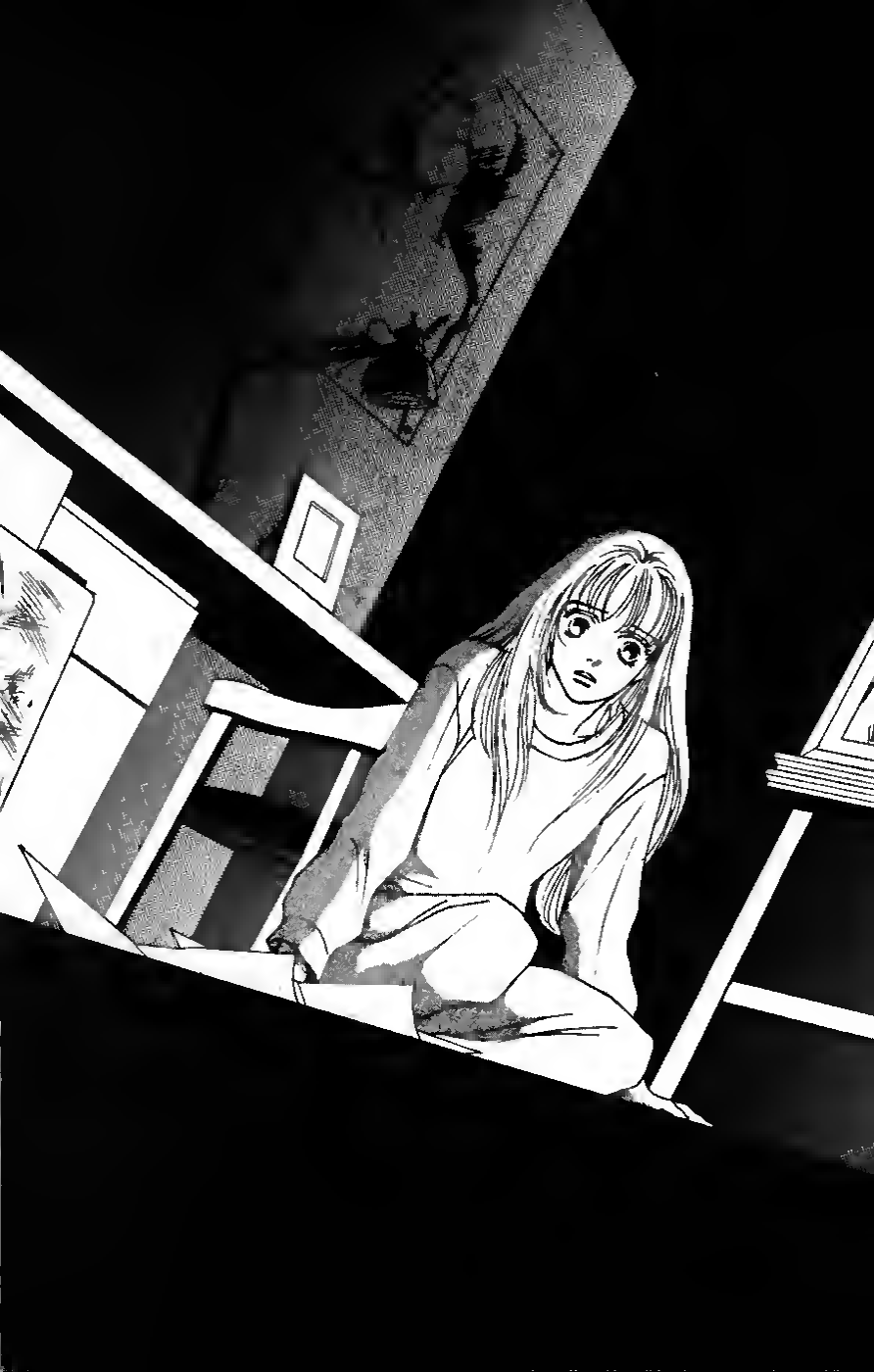
I'M GOING TO END IT ALL BEFORE I DESTROY
MYSELF WITH MYSELF.

THAT'S RIGHT. GO GET REI.
REI. WE CERTAINLY LOOK ALIKE, BUT WE'RE NOT ALIKE AT ALL. LIKE THE SUN AND THE MOON, OUR NATURES ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT. IF ONLY I HAD YOUR STRENGTH.

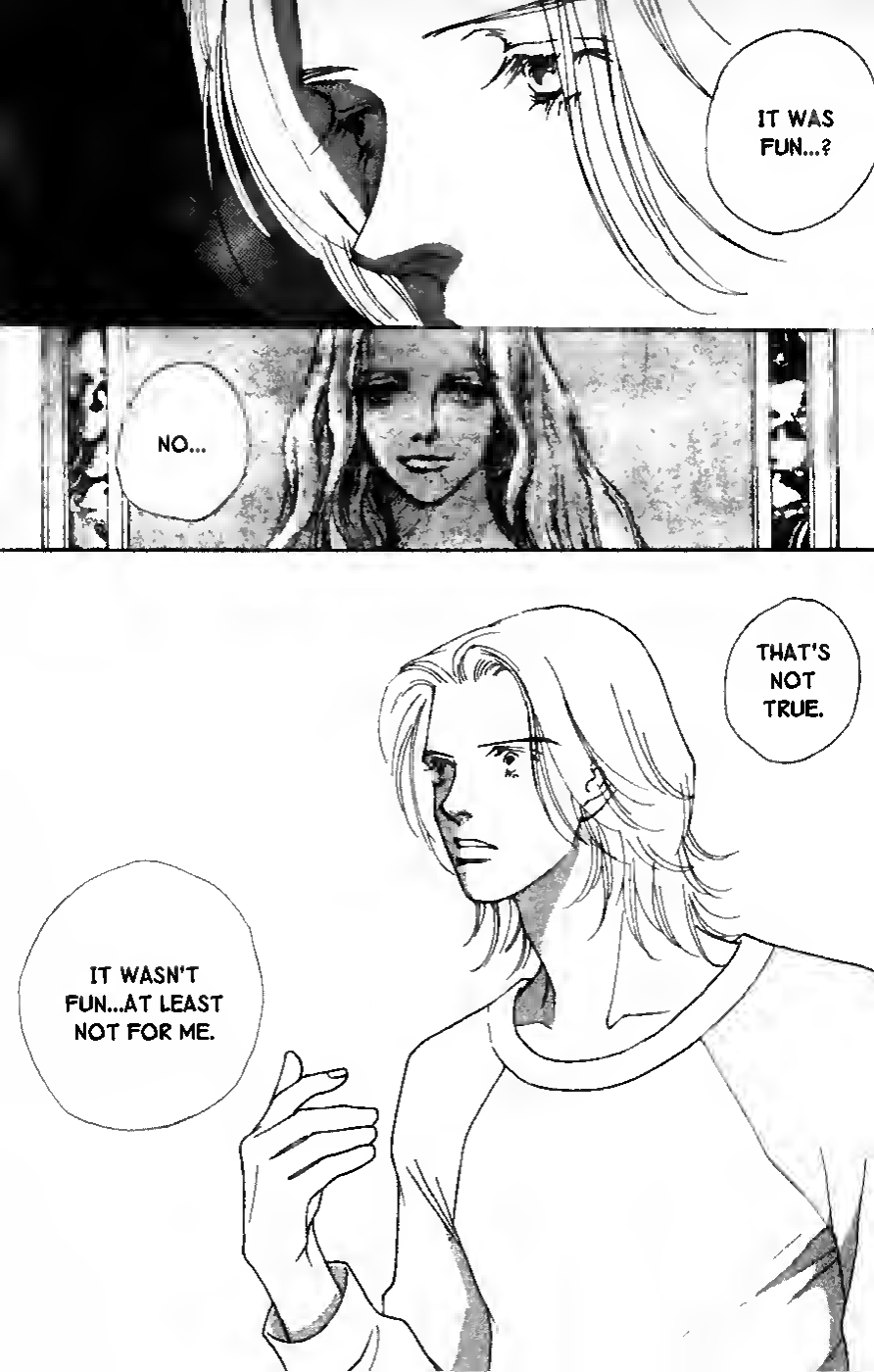
I'LL AT LEAST LEAVE A PERFECT WOUND FOR YOU.

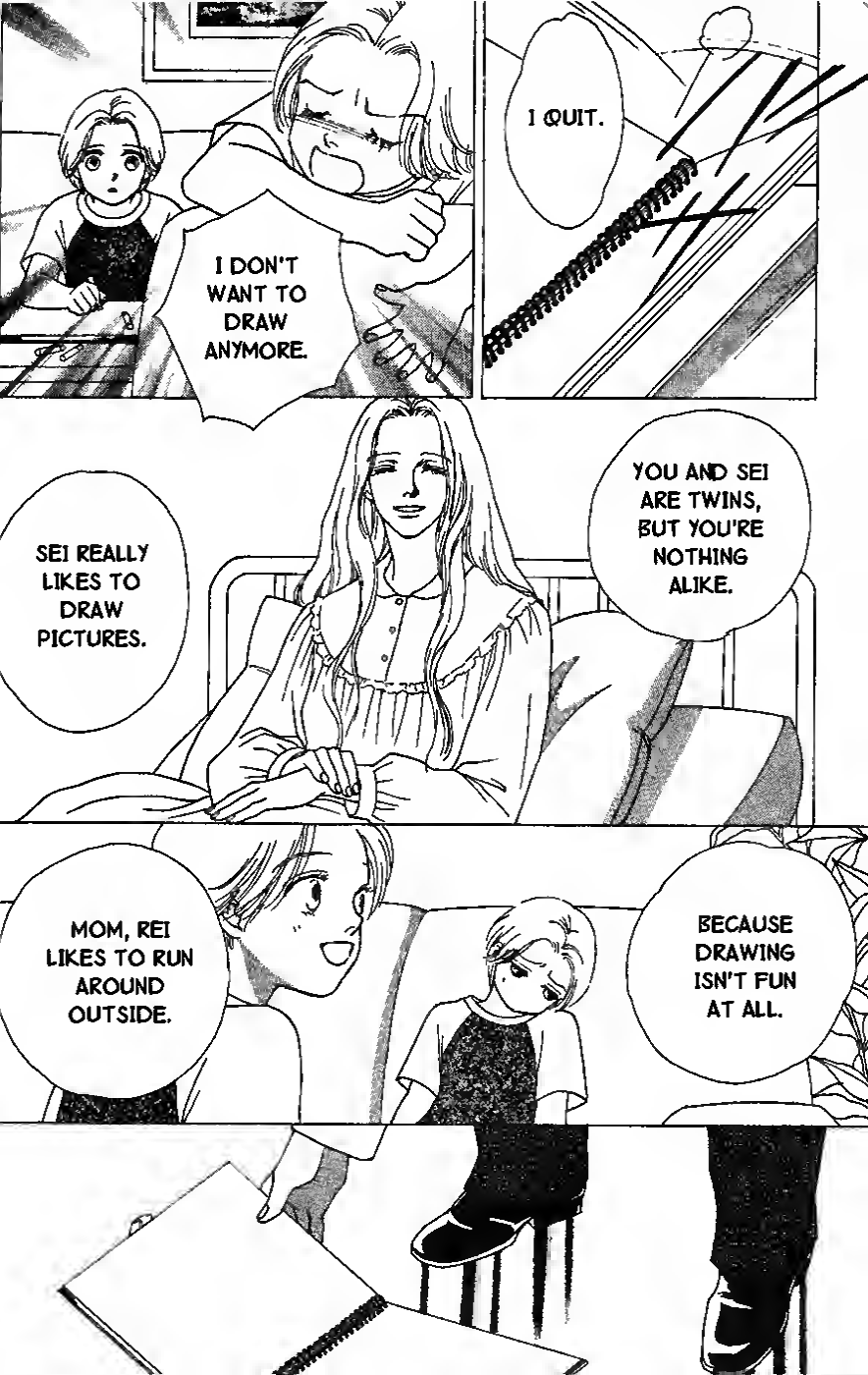
I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU TO COME TO ME...
!
GASP!
UGH!

.....
THIS IS SEI...

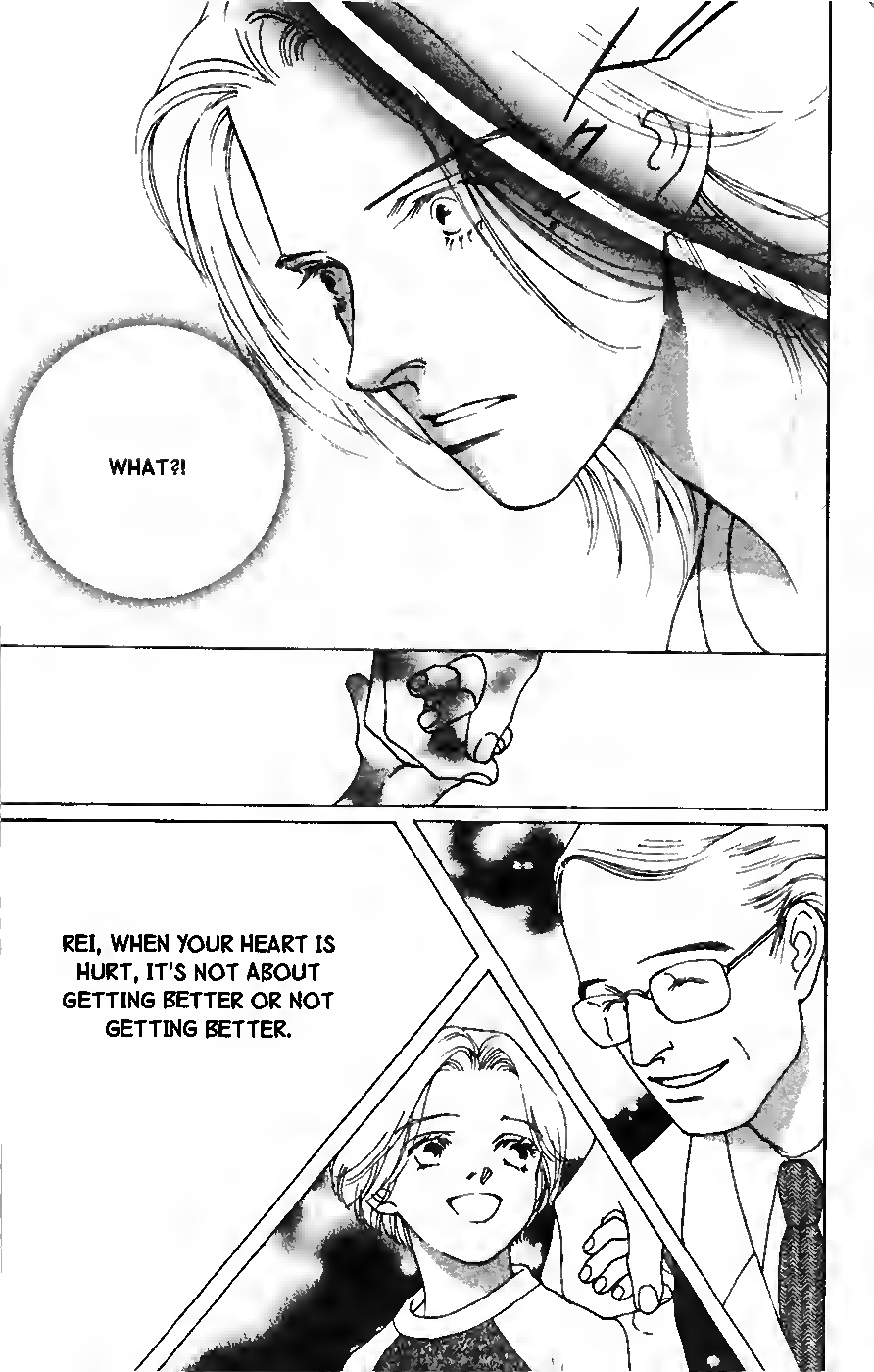


MOM WILL DIE TOO, HUH?
HOW COULD SHE SAY THAT...AND DIE SO YOUNG?
ALL I REMEMBER IS HOW FUN IT WAS FOR ME AND SEI TO VISIT YOU AT THE HOSPITAL EVERY WEEK...
THANKS TO THAT, I CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT KIND OF A MOTHER YOU WERE.
ALL I REMEMBER IS A WHITE BED AND THE SMELL OF MEDICINE.


IT WAS FUN...?
NO...
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
IT WASN'T FUN...AT LEAST NOT FOR ME.


I DON'T WANT TO DRAW ANYMORE.
I QUIT.
SEI REALLY LIKES TO DRAW PICTURES.
YOU AND SEI ARE TWINS, BUT YOU'RE NOTHING ALIKE.
MOM, REI LIKES TO RUN AROUND OUTSIDE.
BECAUSE DRAWING ISN'T FUN AT ALL.

SO REI, YOU'RE AN OUTDOORS TYPE?
YEAH... I GET IN TROUBLE JUST FOR RUNNING IN THE HALL.
THEN THE HOSPITAL MUST BE BORING, RIGHT?
REALLY?!
DO YOU WANT TO GO OUT ON THE GROUNDS WITH ME?
HA HA HA! YOU'VE GOT TOO MUCH ENERGY.


WHAT?!
REI, WHEN YOUR HEART IS HURT, IT'S NOT ABOUT GETTING BETTER OR NOT GETTING BETTER.

IT'S HOW YOU
OVERCOME IT.

DOCTOR...
THE END

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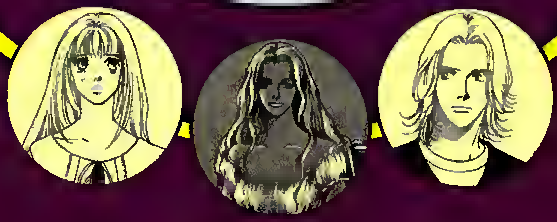

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